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Fashioning Anatomies: Figurations of the Sexed and Gendered Body on the Early Modern English Stage

By

Christian M. Billing



A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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As part of the practical research that led on to this dissertation being written, I directed four all-male productions of Renaissance theatre texts; these were: Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*; Dekker, Ford and Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton*; Ford's *Love's Sacrifice* and Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*; each of these productions has – either directly or indirectly – fed into the overall thesis that appears here and I would therefore like to thank *all* of the various members of Miscreants (as well as Unlimited Theatre, Leeds) – but especially Paul Warwick, Jon Spooner and Chris Thorpe – for the extraordinary degree of professionalism and commitment that they put into the demanding rehearsal processes for each of my productions. They have all certainly

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Clearly, then, having had so much help, it is difficult to see how I could have gone so far wrong ... and I would therefore obviously like to draw my readers' attention to the fact that any errors or oversights that may appear in this dissertation are most certainly the result of my own shortcomings, rather than those of any of the scholars who have helped me so significantly and selflessly.

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The work that is contained in this dissertation is dedicated to an exemplary father:
Dudley M. Billing.

Declaration

The work contained in this thesis is original research that was carried out by the author in the Department of Theatre Studies at the University of Warwick.

It is the belief of the author that none of the material contained herein has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma from any university or institute of education. The author certifies that all of the material in this thesis which is not his own work has been identified in accordance with standard scholarly practice in the humanities.

Signed

Dated

Abstract

Fashioning Anatomies: Figurations of the Sexed and Gendered Body on the Early Modern English Stage

This dissertation is an investigation into the representation of the sexed and gendered body on the English stage between the years 1570 and 1635. The parameters of the study are fully set out in the introduction, however, a summary that might prove useful to the general reader is as follows:

The thesis commences with an account of the 'one-sex' anatomical model – as recently set out by Thomas Laqueur in *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990). It then proceeds to question the dominance of such an anatomical paradigm throughout the entire Renaissance – and, in its first chapter, sets out evidence from various medical treatises in order to outline the emergence of a contrasting 'two-sex' model of human reproductive biology.

Chapter two then uses evidence from a 'two-sex' model in order to re-examine the homo-erotic implications of theatrical narratives that present (or imply) spontaneous sex changes (by means of an analysis of John Lyly's *Gallathea* and Shakespeare's Falstaff plays). In chapter three, attention turns to the female body in early modern English society and attempts to assess the implications of an emergent 'two-sex' model on female cultural and social agency in the period (by means of an analysis of actual female-to-male cross-dressers and the anatomical representations of the female body that were undertaken in elite cultural forms such as the Court Masque). Chapter four then turns back to the professional English transvestite stage in order to examine the strategies of recuperation of the female body that were employed in a production environment that was exclusively controlled by men (and this is undertaken by means of an analysis of Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*).

Chapter five turns its attention to an analysis of theatre and anatomy hall architecture in order to examine the ways in which one exclusive private theatre (Christopher Beeston's Phoenix, in Drury Lane) sought to exploit an architectural accident in order to provide elite audiences with a staged representation of the processes of anatomical dissection. Finally, chapter six examines four plays by John Ford: *The Witch of Edmonton*, *The Broken Heart*, *Love's Sacrifice* and *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* in order to examine the anatomical emblazonment of the female body in two specific Private theatres.

The dissertation also contains four appendices:

- I Selections from the Published Debate Between Jean Riolan and Jacques Duval Concerning the Case of Marie Le Marcis, the Hermaphrodite of Rouen
- II The List of Sex Changes from Johann Schenck von Graffenberg's *Observationum Medicarum Rarum* (Frankfurt, 1600)
- III Selections From Thomas Artus' *L'Isle des Hermaphrodites*
- IV Selections From *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeaux*, translated by Sir John Bouchier [Lord Berners] (Wynkyn de Worde, 1534)
- V Anthony Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses. An Exact history of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their Education in the most Ancient and Famous University of Oxford* (a Biography of William Petty)

Introduction:

Biology versus Performativity [?]: The Significance of Anatomy to the Study of Early Modern English Dramatic Performance (and Reception)

[...] but what need I thus
My well-known body to anatomise
Among my household? ¹

William Shakespeare, *II Henry IV*, 1600

I

Anatomy (or the scientific study of the human body and the detailed systems of corporal notation, classification and codification to which it gave rise) was one of the greatest single achievements of the European Renaissance because, unlike so many of that period's other appropriations of ancient culture (such as its revivals of classical architecture, music, literature and the visual arts), early modern anatomical science did *not* constitute a comparatively uncomplicated 're-birth' or renewal of interest in the theories of the ancients, but instead swiftly developed into a sophisticated questioning and re-appraisal (oftentimes a complete dismissal) of the ontologies and epistemologies that early modern physicians and anatomists knew to have been posited by their classical and medieval forbears.

Between the years 1500 and 1650 one of the most radical shifts ever to have affected European medical science was undertaken as (for the first time in over a millennium) scholars began to re-evaluate their anatomical heritage and (for the first time ever) started to explore the interior workings of the human body through a series of uniquely human dissective investigations. The essential characteristic of Renaissance anatomy was, therefore, that rather than constituting a comparative study (that relied upon the relationship of human anatomy to that of certain animals and the sort of *a priori* deductions that had typified the work of ancient philosophers) the corporal science of the early modern period was undertaken, for the very first time, exclusively as part of an academic culture that asserted the pre-eminence of human dissection.

Historians of medicine agree that in the thousand years up to 1500 there had been little change in medical practice (and therefore corporal philosophy) because, during the middle ages, physicians and apothecaries had been largely content to accept the ideas of Greco-Roman

medical practitioners with only minor modifications. Whilst the medieval and early-Renaissance periods therefore saw relatively few challenges to classical opinion, the closing years of the fifteenth and the early years of the sixteenth centuries were entirely different and, as the philosophical climate rapidly changed, the mid-to-late-Renaissance saw a flourishing of experimental anatomy that meant that the interest in observing nature that had typified ancient Greek culture quickly developed beyond classical modes of *comparative* analysis as anatomists chose instead to delve deep *inside* the human body.

Typical of the Renaissance desire to re-work the classical Greek maxim γνωθι σεαυτον (know thyself) the artist Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519) believed that a skilled painter should study the external appearance of nature if he was to depict it faithfully; yet, much more significantly to my current inquiry, he also felt that, in order to competently delineate the human form, an artist should study the *interior* workings of the human body. Da Vinci therefore observed in his notebooks:

The painter who has acquired a knowledge of the nature of the sinews, muscles and tendons will know exactly in the movement of any limb how many and which of the sinews are the cause of it, and which muscle by its swelling is the cause of this sinew's contracting. So he will be able in divers ways to indicate the various muscles by means of the different attitude of his figures, and he will not do like many who in different actions always make the same things appear in the arm, the back, the breast and the leg.²

Da Vinci turned to human dissection in the course of his life-drawing studies, and eviscerated at least ten human cadavers so that he might understand the form of the human exterior in relation to the workings of its interior *biology*. The first great Renaissance anatomist, Andreus Vesalius, likewise sought to pick up where the Greeks had left off and, in the preface to his seminal *de humani corporis fabrica* (*On the Fabric of the Human Body*, Basel, 1543), he declared:

In this lucky age, [...] anatomy, like every other discipline, has begun to awaken and to lift its head from the sombre depths, so that in certain Universities its old fame has been reinstated. Wanting nothing more than the retrieval of that understanding of the parts of the human body (and spurred on by the example of so many illustrious men) I myself decided that I should give what help I could [...] and so that I did not linger inactive, or myself achieve less than my ancestors, I determined that this branch of philosophy ought to be called back from the dominion of the dead. So that, even if it does not attain among us the perfection it had among the ancient instructors of dissection, at least we will be able to asset without shame that the modern science of anatomy is as good as that of the ancients.³

Vesalius' work soon led on to be much more than the 'reinstatement' of comparative classical anatomy that he hints at here, however, and, crucially to the subject of this dissertation, the flourishing discipline of human dissection (of which Vesalius was to become the leading mid-sixteenth-century exponent) rapidly began to challenge the very ways in which the human body was conceived. Like so many examples in the history of ideas during the early modern period, the story of Andreus Vesalius of Brussels is one of a figure who came at the right time and in the right place, thus enabling him to instigate the first steps in a shift of knowledge that helped to move corporal understanding from one epistemological paradigm to another.⁴

Vesalius was born in Brussels in 1514, a time in which artists were making new studies of the human form and the academic culture of Renaissance humanism was producing a generation of scholars who were re-editing classical Greek anatomical texts. The early-sixteenth century was also a period in which the wood-cutters of the Low-Countries were developing new skills for the illustration of books and the explosion of print culture was facilitating the rapid dissemination (and interrogation) of new ideas. Vesalius (and the anatomists who followed him) came into contact with all of these developments and, as a result of the ways in which they exploited them, quickly changed the way in which elite (and subsequently popular) culture conceived the human form.

Vesalius studied medicine in Paris under Jean Ginter (the scholar who, in 1531, had published a translation into Latin from the Greek of some of the most important of Galen's anatomical works). He subsequently went to Italy to pursue his medical studies further in Padua (a town in which artists and painters such as Michelangelo (1475 – 1564), Raphael (1483 – 1520) and Titian (1477 – 1576) had all made their names through a series of delineations of the human form that were, like da Vinci's, based on the study of skeletons and the dissection of human cadavers). It was therefore with a painter from Titian's workshop (another Fleming, John Stephen of Calcar) that Vesalius worked to produce the first detailed anatomical illustrations for his *de humani corporis fabrica*, the book that was published whilst Vesalius was Professor of Anatomy at Padua and that changed not only people's knowledge of the human body but, much more significantly, the manner in which they learned about the human form. Vesalius insisted throughout his *fabrica* that it was *only* through dissection (and the rigorous *ocular* investigation of the human body that it entailed) that anatomists could find out the *truth* about the human form. Significantly then, in this belief Vesalius clashed with the physicians of the previous generation (who had believed that the *books* of Greek physicians such as Galen contained all that there was to know about human anatomy). Vesalius' publications thus took great pride in their visual display of a new and important (metaphorical) body of evidence that had been gleaned from the dissection slab – and that could now be passed on to innumerable readers through a sophisticated series of explanatory texts and illustrations. It was this clash of epistemologies (and the development of a refined system for the dissemination of emergent biological theories) that had momentous consequences for corporal understanding in the period.

Galen's teaching on physiology and anatomy came mainly from the dissection of animals such as apes and dogs (because in his day the dissection of the human body was frowned upon due to its supposed lack of respect for the soul), yet by the time that Vesalius succeeded to the chair of anatomy at the University of Padua, scientific opinion was changing. Vesalius helped to revolutionise corporal science as a result of his view that it was only by studying the human body *itself* that a scholar could really understand the way in which human anatomy worked. Because Vesalius was able to practice the dissection of human cadavers, he could now *show* that Galen had been mistaken in some of his fundamental descriptions of human anatomy, a fact that he

evidently seemed to relish. As a result of his various dissective endeavours, the early pages of the *fabrica* do not shy away from pointing out that Galen was mistaken about a subject as obvious as the construction of the human jaw:

The mandible of most animals is made up of two bones connected together at the top of the chin where the lower jaw concludes in a point. In man, however, the lower jaw is made from of a single bone [...] Nevertheless, Galen and most of the accomplished anatomists since Hippocrates have asserted that the [human] jaw is not a single bone. However this may be, up until the present, no human jaw has come to my attention that is made up of two bones. ⁵

Likewise (and in a point that I shall come back to in Chapter I of this dissertation), the *fabrica* also pointed out several fundamental errors in the Galenic ('one-sex') model of reproductive biology and was at pains to distance itself from the notion that female reproductive organs were derived solely in relation to those of the male, asserting that: 'Galen never inspected a human uterus' and also calling attention to the fundamental errors of biology that he saw as central to the three major Galenic texts on the subject: *The Use of Parts*, *On Semen* and *On the Dissection of the Uterus*.⁶

A full survey of the development of early modern theories of human reproductive anatomy will follow in Chapter I of this dissertation, but the point that I want to stress here (and it is one that has so often been overlooked in much recent literary criticism) is that the history of early modern anatomy is one in which the *questioning, development* and *eventual overthrow* of ancient epistemologies was pre-eminent. The fundamental point that I therefore wish to make is that the advancement of ideas that was induced by early modern anatomical science came as a direct result of dissection and the annotated evidence of eviscerated human cadavers that it produced: that early modern anatomy therefore constituted a constant challenge, commentary upon (and sometimes even an outright rejection of) the work of ancient authors who had not been able to work in similar ways – and that it also relied upon systems of communication that branched out through many of the visual arts

As I aim to demonstrate in Chapters I and V of this dissertation, the processes of dissection that were started by Vesalius (and the artists with whom he worked) were carried on by the two successive chairs of anatomy in Padua (Renaldo Columbus and Gabriel Fallopio) and were subsequently passed on through a range of physicians in northern Europe until they eventually led on to the advent of 'new science' in the early-sixteenth century – in the work of physicians such as William Harvey (who published the radical treatise *De Motu Cordis* (*On the Motion of the Heart*) in Leiden in 1628 and began to divorce the human body from the divine order of creation) or in the corporal philosophy of scholars such as Rene Descartes (whose *Discours de la Methode*, published in the same town in 1637, in many ways completed the early-modern period's radical overhaul of corporal philosophy, removed God from the centre of a microcosmographic representation of human anatomy and began to posit a view of the body as a

human machine). It is with this notion of a *questioning* and *probing* of ancient ideas in mind (and the idea that early modern anatomy made a relentless series of challenges to the medieval period's residual corporal philosophies) that I want now to turn to the implications of early modern anatomy on the study of Renaissance English Theatre.

II

In recent years, scholars operating in a wide range of literary disciplines have attempted to recast the consensus of critical opinion concerning the ways in which the dramatists, performers, spectators and critics of early modern English theatre understood the anatomical facts of sex-identity and the sociological constructs of gender. Over the last decade in particular, the discipline of early modern studies has bowed to a general consensus that the 'one-sex' anatomical model held intellectual sway as the defining mode of corporal understanding throughout Europe right up until the enlightenment, and the cultural dominance of this teleological paradigm of reproductive biology (throughout the entire Renaissance) has been argued to have had a particularly profound effect on dramaturgical construction of sexed and gendered bodies on the London stage from the late sixteenth century until closure of the theatres in 1642.

Visual and verbal evidence drawn from the high-ground of expensive and lavishly illustrated anatomical treatises right down to the somewhat more mundane gynaecological manuals and pop-up directories for midwives and apothecaries has regularly been excised from its original explanatory context and presented in literary criticism that seeks to outline an entirely homologous reproductive model as it attempts to delineate a reproductive epistemology in which the female was considered an unstable, imperfect and incomplete variant of the male: a 'one-sex' model (with precariously similar philosophical and medical conceptions of masculinity and femininity) that is claimed to have been ubiquitously underpinned by popular culture, myth, folklore and various genres of folk literature.

Contained within any such linear paradigm for sex-identity, however, lurks the tacit implication that male and female reproductive anatomies might have been considered in some way to be fluid or mutable; that change, either progressive or regressive, was deemed feasible along the unbroken continuum that separated a teleonomically 'perfected' male from his, as-yet, 'imperfected' female counterpart.⁷ It has consequently become fashionable to argue that latent corporal vicissitude was believed to be particularly palpable for women and adolescents during the Renaissance.

Acceptance of such a startling ontological paradigm has, clearly, had a profound effect on current scholarly reconstructions of early modern corporal understanding, and equally upon literary criticism that concerns itself with representations of sex, sexuality and gender on the early modern stage.⁸ Scholars such as Stephen Orgel, Jean Howard, Phyllis Rackin and Stephen Greenblatt have all recently sought to historicize play-texts, theatrical performatives and the semiotics of early modern theatre by means of their juxtaposition against a somewhat oversimplified Galenic model of reproductive anatomy, against anti-transvestite polemics, and by comparison with anti-theatrical discourse that hints at performative sexual vicissitude. Such critics assert that within their 'scientifically historicized' analytical framework they may more freely illuminate the cross-dressing and sexual transformations of dramatic narratives (or the representational conventions of the transvestite acting tradition itself) and, operating within a Laqueurean echo chamber, they claim to have unearthed deep sociological manifestations of sexual 'anxiety' and a great deal of 'apprehension' centred around the possibility of sexual vacillation, anatomical flux and (therefore) the breakdown of received gender systems.⁹

Jean Howard, for example, displays a typical acceptance of an entirely homologous male/female reproductive model in her introduction to what is swiftly becoming the standard teaching edition of *As You Like It*. She observes:

To the question of how men and women differ, Renaissance anatomical theory gave some answers dissimilar to those we now take for granted. According to Galen, an ancient Greek anatomist whose work on the body was widely influential in the early modern period, men and women had the same anatomical structures; women were simply less perfect than men, there having been less heat present when they were conceived. This meant, among other things, that women's genitalia were just like a man's – with the vagina and ovaries corresponding to the penis and scrotum – except that they had not been pushed outside the body as a man's had been. Because male-female difference was therefore less grounded in ideas of absolute bodily difference than is typical today, much emphasis was placed on behavioural differences and on distinctions of dress [...] ¹⁰

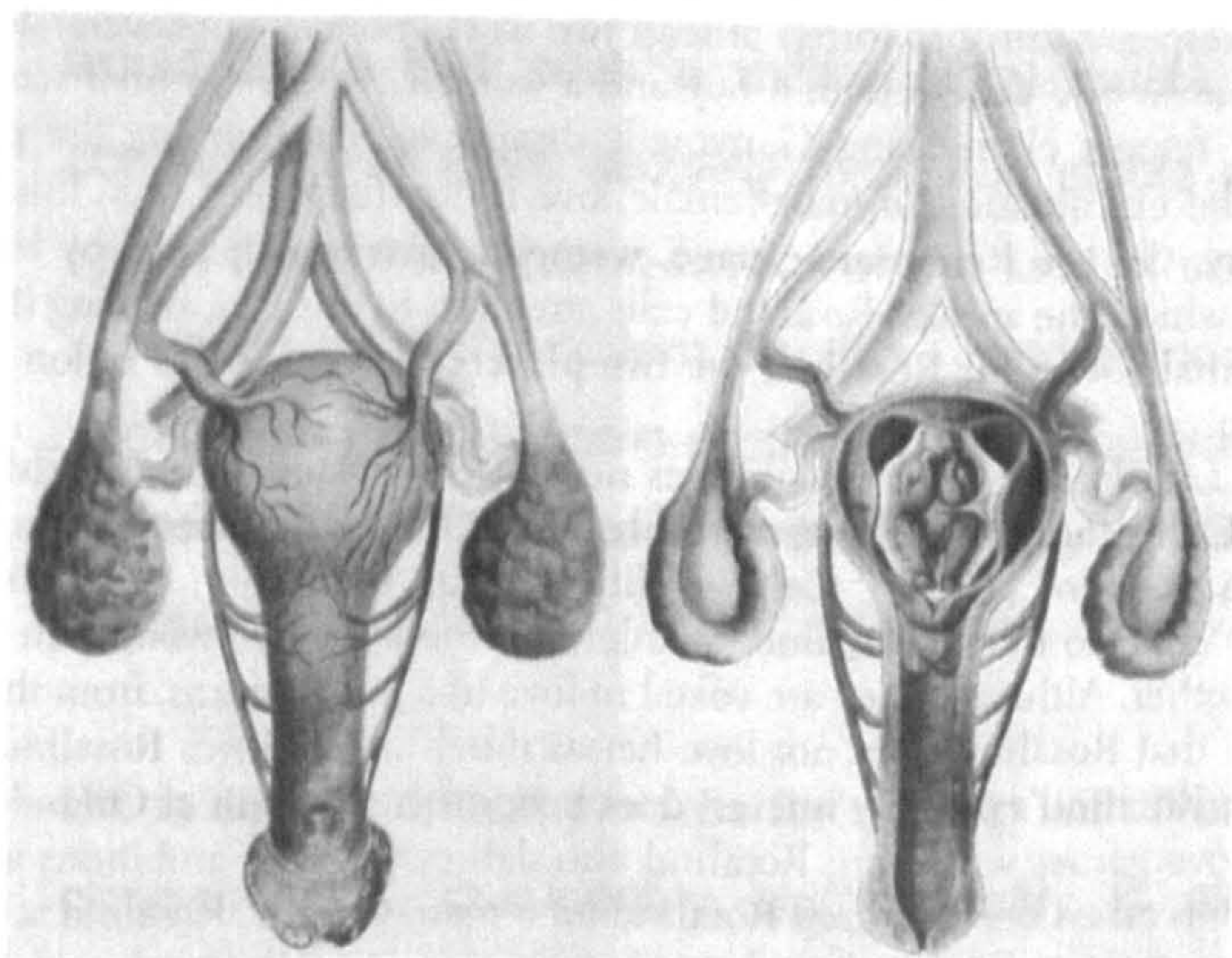


Figure 1

Vagina, Uterus and Womb taken from Fritz Weindler, *Gesichte der Gynakologisch anatomischen Abbildung*. Reproduced in Jean Howard's introduction to *As You Like It* in *The Norton Shakespeare*

The assertion (printed alongside a reproduction of Figure 1) is just one indication amongst many of the degree to which Thomas Laqueur's 'one-sex' anatomical model has permeated the academy as a scholarly benchmark of early-modern sex identity; yet, as I hope to demonstrate in Chapter I of this dissertation, taking a Galenic paradigm as the unified reference point for a continuing flux of experimental ideas that was developing within the discipline of Renaissance anatomy may well prove to

be a somewhat phantasmagorical means of critical illumination.

Coming from a slightly different perspective, and yet equally startling, is the way in which the extreme anti-theatrical rantings of Puritan pamphleteers such as Rainolds, Gosson, Stubbes and Prynne (with their talk of 'adulteration' and 'degeneration' in the gender and – most significantly – sex of actors) have been taken at face value and presented as further evidence of a dramatic stage generally perceived as the primary locus of unregulated corporal dissolution and unfettered body-bending.¹¹ Taking the two standard accusations that were levelled at both actors and audiences by hard-left Puritans (effeminacy and sodomy) and linking anti-theatricalist claims about the effects of what might now be termed sexual persuasions (or individual sex-acts) to pervasive sociological 'anxieties' about the breakdown of sex and gender *systems*, critics have recently argued that increasingly performative notions of gender *and* sex-identity existed in London during the golden age; that *acting* a particular gender was perceived as inducing a direct physical effect upon the performing subject's somehow unstable biological sex-identity. Yet (and as Howard inadvertently reveals in her citation of Galenic rather than *post-Vesalian* anatomical paradigms) the existence of such 'anxiety' rests either upon acceptance of ill-defined and entirely malleable notions of reproductive anatomy (more dependent upon the second century AD than upon *Renaissance* science), upon taking fundamentalist anti-theatrical rhetoric at face value, or both.

In the critical methodology which has recently emerged, late twentieth century performative gender theory has been combined with a model of reproductive anatomy that – although undeniably evident in ancient Greek and medieval anatomies – has had to be actively *read into* post-Vesalian and seventeenth-century treatises.¹² Whilst the resultant marriage-of-convenience has been used to emphasise the flexibility of self-fashioned genders and to tease out perturbations over anatomical transformation coincident to the performance of a particular sex, I would argue that such a methodology exists, as ever, *only* at the price of undermining conceptions of more securely fixed and stable male and female sex-identities and, therefore (given the obvious homo-erotics of the kind of cross-dressed and cross-gendered performances witnessed by early-modern English – and some Spanish – audiences) in a somewhat bizarre undermining of the homo-erotics of much early-modern drama (and therefore, indirectly, in an undermining of the possibility of either gay or lesbian homosexual subjectivity during the early modern period).¹³

Since current critical practice for dealing with literary texts or social documents that touch upon cross-dressing, sex-identity and sexuality is almost ubiquitously to buy into the 'one-sex' biological paradigm that has recently been posited by Laqueur, recent philological discourse has witnessed an almost complete meltdown of the notion that scientific paradigms delineating bifurcate anatomical difference existed *at all* during the early modern period; that sex identity was in no way understood to be fixed, concrete or immutable. This, together with the pre-

eminence of Foucauldian methodologies in the New Historicism (and Foucault's own account of the post-enlightenment 'birth' of homosexuality) has gone a long way towards ensuring that a cross-dressed *hic mulier* – exhibiting and enacting selected semiotics and performatives of masculinity whilst also displaying certain aspects of her biological femininity – is claimed to have been read by early modern beholders as a dangerously unstable *biological* entity, *despite* the fact that such a reading undermines much of her proto-feminism (and, indeed, even the possibility of her lesbian subjectivity). Equally, the idea that boy-actors were actually perceived to 'adulterate' their sex and quite literally understood to 'dissolve' or 'degenerate' (*à la* Paré) into the bodies of the female characters whom they 'personated' has undermined the strength of arguments which mitigate for a more metatheatrical homoerotic poetics and, therefore, of the possibility of some degree of homosexual spectator subjectivity as a primary motivation behind the phenomenality of early modern histrionic transvestite display.

In recent critical interpretations MTF (male to female) transvestite boy-actors, the FTM (female to male) cross-dressers of dramatic narratives, the increasing number of FTM cross-dressers in London society at the turn of the seventeenth century, an 'Amazon' Queen Elizabeth and an 'effeminate' King James have *all* been linked to the notion that sex-identity and gender were thought of as so highly unstable during the late-Renaissance that any subject was feared capable of shifting from female – through androgen – to male (and perhaps back again) according to the performative role which that self-sexing/self-gendering/self-fashioning subject transiently 'acted out'. Current critical appetite is very much for corporal moulds containing liquid sexes fashioned through the enactment of gendered performatives. On the contrary, however, what I aim to argue in the opening chapter of this dissertation is that concrete medical evidence of (or general cultural acceptance for) such fluid sex – or even gender – models (other than those occasionally instanced by out-dated folklore, classical mythology and the mercenary – and let us not forget *hired* – pens of anti-theatrical Puritans) is *extremely* thin on the ground, especially any evidence that explicitly refers to the oft asserted power of histrionic activity (above any other) to instigate such sexual mutations.¹⁴

The aim of the first two chapters of this dissertation is consequently to argue that a more radical reading of transvestite genres, conventions and narratives comes through an acceptance of some *fixed* conception of sex-identity (Chapter I) and the development of a more overtly homoerotic poetics (Chapter II). De facto, therefore, in an acceptance of a much greater degree of homo-erotic interest amongst the theatrical spectators of early modern London.¹⁵ If boy actors were not understood to be capable of 'degeneration' into the female characters whom they played, then the possibility of a heterosexual 'legitimation' of the erotic performances that they undertook with the older male actors with whom they shared their stage is suddenly removed (and the homo-erotics of the theatrical situation inevitably therefore come very much to the fore). In Chapter II of this dissertation (once I have outlined some of the notions of sexual difference and corporal stability that are evident in early modern anatomy) I will therefore attempt to

undertake a reading of the sexual transformations that are implied in *The Boke of Huon of Bordeaux*, in John Lyly's *Gallathea* and in the sexual mutability of a character such as Shakespeare's Falstaff so as to underscore the impossibility of actual anatomical transformations and therefore highlight the homoerotic (dare I say it: possibly homosexual) *metatheatricality* of such texts.

Although the most virulent anti-theatrical polemicists have been cited in recent critical analysis precisely *because* their exaggerated rhetoric ascribes to theatrical 'personation' the power to 'deconstruct' or 'degenerate' sex in ways which suit late twentieth-century theorists (and may be wrung out of manipulations of a 'one-sex' anatomical model) the hyperbolic claims of Prynne, those in Montaigne's travel journals and the over-quoted observations of surgeons such as Ambroise Paré may in no way be read as watertight 'proof' of a Renaissance spectator's perception of sex (or even gender) as unstable constructs; nor of the theatre as a cultural locus of anatomical aberration; nor of a dominant (or emergent) biological model (either intellectual or popular) in which sex-identity was considered to be precariously fickle at the end of the sixteenth century. Loosely conflating Puritan diatribes with Galenic, Aristotelian and certain aspects of pre-Vesalian anatomy has certainly enabled critics to argue that assumptions about sex-identity were nebulous enough for theatrical subjects to be considered able to change a 'fluid' biological sex from male to female (or vice versa) using only the semiotics of costume and the performatives of gender impersonation; that biological sex was thought capable of taking shape according to the socio-performatory mould into which it was poured; yet medical (and even most of the literary) evidence simply does not support the supposition that changing sex was considered as easy as donning the accoutrements of costume, modifying the semiotics of gesture and commanding a different vocal register whilst summoning up great emotion in performance. In every instance of such theory, critical readings that are reliant upon performativity and 'unstable' biological sex-identity profoundly (and perhaps deliberately) undermine the homo-erotic implications of a lot of early modern theatre – and, thereby, also subtly undermine the possible existence of a Renaissance audience member's homosexual subjectivity.¹⁶

Laura Levine, in a reading of three major anti-theatrical polemicists, recently began a seminal critique of early modern theatrical cross-dressing with the startling observation that:

Sometime in 1579, in a pamphlet which was to establish the terms of attack and defense for another sixty years, Stephen Gosson made the curious remark that theatre "effeminated" the mind. Four years later, in a pamphlet twice the size, Phillip Stubbes clarified this claim even as he heightened it by insisting that male actors who wore women's clothing could literally "adulterate" male gender. Fifty years later, in a one-thousand-page tract which may have hastened the closing of the theatres, William Prynne described a man whom women's clothing had literally caused to "degenerate" into a woman. In the years of mounting pamphlet war about the stage, the vague sense that theatre could somehow soften the responses of the audience had been replaced by the fear – expressed in virtually biological terms – that the theatre could structurally transform men into women [...]¹⁷

Even given that Gosson is not talking about theatre *per se* here (the full passage in *The Schoole of Abuse* states that it is *music* in theatres which 'effeminates' the mind)¹⁸ the obvious question that is not demanded of any of these polemicists is: how seriously may they (or any minority Puritan) be taken as an accurate barometer of intellectual (or popular) thought concerning the nature of sex-identity in a period spanning more than half a century? The notion that MTF sex transformation ever held currency is extremely tenuous and, as I intend to demonstrate, the 'one-sex' model that was posited by the Greeks had effectively broken down by the end of the first school of Vesalian anatomy (some twenty years prior to Gosson penning his manuscript). It would therefore seem more reasonable to conclude, in contrast to Levine, that such exaggerated polemics are starkly *unrepresentative* of early modern thought concerning the *body* and are rather the product of a hyperbolic, fundamentalist *rhetoric* that was designed precisely to shock readers and to scandalise the theatre (a discourse that Margot Heinemann has pointed out to have been frequently commissioned by powerful economic groups of the City of London who were keen to see the theatres closed on *any* pretext).¹⁹ Will critics in 2405 argue with such conviction that the majority of late twentieth century English and Irish Protestants concurred, quite literally, with Dr. Ian Paisley's description of the Catholic Church as 'the Antichrist in Rome' or that the majority of the Islamic world currently views the United States as 'the Great Satan'?

My point is that acceptance of this supposed anti-theatrical insistence that external signifiers were capable of instigating transitory (or permanent) biological transformation has certainly served to shore-up a critical discourse in which the political agendas of performative gender theory and, somewhat ironically, a post-Foucauldian queer theory that repeatedly denies the existence of Renaissance homosexuality can be easily addressed; yet that such notions prove – both historically (in court records and pamphlets) and medically (in anatomical treatises) – to be deeply problematic, especially if the *philosophical* and *medical* frameworks to which such views are obliquely connected are left half-accounted for – or only selectively cited. If the supposed anatomical 'anxiety' of a small (and certainly unrepresentative) group of Puritans is to be taken as unquestioned common currency amongst the producers and play-goers of early modern London, then two gargantuan presumptions must be accepted. They are:

- (i) That a model of sex difference allowing for spontaneous and medically un-aided flux from one biological sex to another (and crucially both FTM and MTF) was an unchallenged dominant intellectual monolith in a period stretching from Lyly to Massinger and was universally accepted by intellectuals and imbeciles alike.

and

- (ii) That due to the heightened emotions and charged nature of performance, the theatre was generally considered the single social arena most likely to be the site of such sexual transformation.

Starting from these assertions, I would like to begin this dissertation with my own 'dissection' of the 'Renaissance notion' that the human body had an innate anatomical capacity for

spontaneous sex-change – and to outline the medical arguments by which such a bi-transformatory model (i.e. both FTM *and* MTF – as is implied in Levine's reading of the anti-theatricalists – were consistently denied). I shall also endeavour to point out that each of the sparsely recorded historical instances of sexual transformation, androgyny and hermaphroditism occur *not* in theatrical but in domestic or working environments and that such instances are either clearly fictitious, somewhat tongue in cheek, or perceived to be so shocking that the 'transformed' or 'hermaphroditic' subjects were either executed or punished (or ritually cleansed by their secular and ecclesiastical oligarchies prior to somewhat muted re-integration into the community).

In what follows of this dissertation, then, Chapter I will present a survey of primary medical sources that is intended to demonstrate that MTF sex-transformation (of the sort intimated by Levine) was *never* deemed possible and that, despite citations from classical sources and reported instances of FTM mutation in treatises of the early to mid-sixteenth century, such cases were becoming viewed as physically impossible precisely *during* the period that led up to the explosion of theatrical activity in London at the close of the sixteenth century (and were subsequently denied by almost every anatomist and philosopher from the fifteen-eighties onwards). I will then argue, in Chapter II, that, in order to better understand the anti-theatricalists, their claims should be read as hyperbolic and figurative, based on fears of losing a socially constructed heterosexuality and not on the fear of an actual transformation of biological sex. Fears of the homo-erotic, of succumbing to latent homosexual desires, of 'effeminisation' as the loss of a teleologically policed *heterosexuality*, of performing the act of sodomy itself, of being sodomised (playing what Stephen Orgel has described as the *or worse* of Gosson's 'they play the sodomits or worse'), the overt desirability of the 'play-boy' and the catering of the theatre for its audiences' homoerotic appetites are all, perhaps, the real 'anxieties' which underlie anti-theatrical rhetoric, rather than an impossibly literal 'degeneration' into the female form.²⁰

In Chapter III I will then turn my attention to the implications of a breakdown in the one-sex model for *female* agency in the period and attempt to outline the *significance* of a collapse of an anatomical paradigm that had (for centuries) constructed women as incomplete and imperfect variants of men – together with the way in which the emergence of a 'perfect' (and therefore newly autonomous) female body within a new *two-sex* anatomical paradigm allowed, for the first time in history, for a conception of femininity that might allow articulations of sexual equality that were based upon anatomical *difference* (rather than merely succumbing to the notion that women were imperfect and incomplete male homologues). After a brief survey of sumptuary legislation (up to the succession of King James I), then, Chapter III will turn to the abrupt rise in FTM cross-dressing in London during the years 1580 to 1620, and will attempt to link the proto-feminist philosophies that were articulated during the *querrelles des femmes* to a new-found independent *biological* sex-identity (and therefore to the possibility of a newborn anatomical autonomy) for women.

Whilst it is certainly true that the rise in female agency in the period 1580 – 1620 (in both England and in France) can be linked to the power and authority of female figures from the recent past (such as Elizabeth I or Catherine de Medici), it is also interesting to speculate on the fact that the major rises in proto-feminism (and particularly the appropriation of sumptuary signifiers that delineate notions of *gendered* authority) also occur in the very geographical centres (urban capitals) in which cultural elites were now coming into contact with recent developments in *anatomical* theory. Chapter III of this dissertation will therefore seek to argue that the FTM cross-dressing that was undertaken (principally by elite and upper-middle-class women) in early modern London (and its ostensible *display* of biological femininity), together with the revelation of female *anatomy* in cultural forms such as the masque, are connected to the developments in anatomical science that had led on to the 'liberation' of female biology from an unchallengeable philosophical position of anatomical subordinancy in the old 'one-sex' model.

Chapter IV will then turn to the ways in which I think the theatre attempted to *recuperate* the Viragos, Amazons and cross-dressed women who were apparently emerging in early-modern English society – and the techniques by which (through the enactment of a complex system of retrieval in which conservative conceptions of patriarchal authority and heterosexual companionate marriage are highlighted in order to subordinate a newly anatomically and sexually liberated sex) the theatre subtly *co-opted* ostensibly proto-feminist characters so as to shore up patriarchal taxonomies of gender that subordinated women. In my analysis of Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl*, I will therefore assert that (despite her professed rejection of patriarchal expectations and (hetero)sexual relations), the character of Moll Cutpurse is used to bring about a subtle narrative conclusion that relies upon the supposedly natural *telos* of heterosexual marriage – and the objectivity of women within (hetero)sexual intercourse. The second part of this chapter will then turn to the characters of Evadne and Aspatia in *The Maid's Tragedy*, in order to demonstrate the ways in which anatomy (and the control of the female body in both sexual and reproductive acts) functioned in the punishment of assertive female agency – together with the physical (and rhetorical) ways in which transgressive FTM cross-dressers were put in their place in the male authored fantasies of early-modern English drama.

In Chapter V, I will return directly to the *processes* of anatomy and (in an analysis of the performatives of dissection and the architectural environment of anatomy theatres) I will look at the ways in which one particular private theatre profited from its accidental architectural similarities to anatomy theatres and proceeded to re-create the voyeuristic spectacle of anatomical dissection for its audiences. In this penultimate chapter, I aim to argue that, as anatomical science evolved, it developed a distinctly *gendered* operational system and an increasing fascination with the female body as the *object* of its dissections – that anatomy itself consequently began to act as a subtle means of re-mastering and controlling the very women

whom corporal science had (unintentionally) liberated as a result of its recent overthrow of the 'one-sex' model.

Chapter VI will finally turn to the interplay of anatomy, dissection and sexual violence in the tragedies of John Ford at the Phoenix (or Cockpit) Theatre in Drury Lane. In this chapter I will accordingly look at the ways in which Ford's plays repeatedly locate the female body as the site of a sadistic re-inscription of patriarchal dominance over the female body. In this chapter *The Witch of Edmonton*, *The Broken Heart*, *Love's Sacrifice* and finally *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* will all be analysed in an account of the ways in which one specific Caroline Private Theatre both attempted to cash in on its elite audience's desire to see experimental anatomy and participated in its own metaphorical 'dissection' of the sexually delineated female body.

This dissertation also includes five appendices that are central to its general thesis and, accordingly, deserve some explanation here.

Appendix I constitutes a twin columned English / French translation of the published debate between Jean Riolan and Jacques Duval concerning the case of Marie Le Marcis (the supposed Hermaphrodite of Rouen). This material is central to much of my analysis of the breakdown of the 'one-sex' model and – as no complete English translation of these documents other than my own exists, to my knowledge (yet despite frequent reference being made to this case in current literary criticism) – it constitutes a valuable resource that should be used in conjunction with my first chapter.

Appendix II is a list (in Latin) of supposed sex-changes as it appears in Johann Schenck von Graffenberg's *Observationum Medicarum Rarum* (Frankfurt, 1600) – again this material is to be used in conjunction with Chapter I.

Appendix III is another translation: it is an English / French presentation of the articles of faith of hermaphrodites from Thomas Artus' *L'Isle des Hermaphrodites* (Paris, 1709) – this is the last resource to be used in conjunction with Chapter I.

Appendix IV constitutes selections from *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeaux*, translated by Sir John Bouchier [Lord Berners] (Wynkyn de Worde, 1534). This material is out of print, not widely available, and contains the narrative of Ide and Olive that is central to the first section of my second chapter; I therefore include it should the reader wish to peruse Bouchier's narrative more widely than through the selected quotations that I include in my own chapter on this material.

My last appendix is the biography of Dr. William Petty from Anthony Wood's, *Athenæ Oxonienses. An Exact history of all the Writers and Bishops who have had their Education in the*

most Ancient and Famous University of Oxford. This information is both alluded to and drawn upon in Chapter VI of this dissertation.

Finally, the CD rom that is included here contains both various slides of northern European anatomy halls and several screen shots of my own digital reconstruction of Inigo Jones' Barber Surgeons' Anatomy Hall (Monkwell Street, London, 1631). This CD also includes an animated 'fly-through' of the latter space that will, I hope, prove useful as a resource and should therefore be used alongside Chapter V of this dissertation.

Notes to the Introduction:

¹ William Shakespeare, *The Second Part of King Henry IV* (London, 1600), Induction, lines 20 – 22.

² Leonardo Da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, edited by Edward Mac Curdy (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), vol. 2. p. 235.

³ Andreus Vesalius, *de humani corporis fabrica* (Basle, 1543), Preface, folio 3^r. The translation from the original Latin is my own.

⁴ The best account of Vesalius' life and work is probably contained in Charles D. O'Malley, *Andreus Vesalius of Brussels 1514 - 1564* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965) – to which I make frequent reference throughout this dissertation.

⁵ Vesalius, *fabrica*, pp. 43 - 44. The translation from the original Latin is my own.

⁶ Vesalius *fabrica*, p. 532. This instance of Vesalian disagreement with the Galenic paradigm is also noted in O'Malley, *Vesalius*, p. 142.

⁷ Since the concept of 'teleology' has frequently been associated with a final 'aim' of life (thereby implying some kind of metaphysical or religious belief), J. Z. Young has drawn a significant distinction between such a concept and the more material term 'teleonomy' (that can more simply be used to describe the directional character of living activities). See John Zachary Young, *Programs of the Brain: based on the Gifford Lectures, 1975-7* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 16.

⁸ The notion of a 'one-sex anatomical model' will be fully discussed below. The most celebrated recent example of such a thesis is to be found in Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge Mass & London: Harvard University Press, 1990), especially pp. 1 - 148.

Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have also recently observed that: 'In the Renaissance there was no privileged discourse (as biology was to become in the nineteenth century) that could even *claim* to establish a definitive method by which one distinguished male from female' (see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, 'Fetishizing Gender: Constructing the Hermaphrodite in Renaissance Europe', in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, edited by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 80.

⁹ See Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: the Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and also Stephen Greenblatt, 'Fiction and Friction', in *Twelfth Night*, edited by R. S. White (New York: St Martin's, 1996).

¹⁰ Jean Howard, 'Introduction to *As You Like It*', in *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, Jean Howard and Katherine Maus (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), p. 1595. See also Stephen Greenblatt's introduction to *Twelfth Night* in the same volume (pp. 1761 – 1767).

¹¹ See (most notably) Laura Levine, 'Men In Women's Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization from 1579 - 1642,' *Criticism* 28 (1986), pp. 121 – 43, and Stephen Orgel, 'Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989), pp. 7 - 29.

¹² Most notably that of Judith Butler. See her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); *Bodies that Matter: on the Discursive limits of 'sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993) and *Excitable Speech: a Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

¹³ The Spanish question is significant, because, as Orgel has pointed out, Spain enjoyed a short period of transvestism on its Renaissance stages until the homoeroticism that it entailed evidently became intolerable to the authorities. He observes:

Spain, in this as in so much else, offers a useful parallel: the Spanish authorities worried the question of histrionic morality with far greater zeal than the English, and in 1596 they banned women from the stage; but the spectacle of transvestite boys was found to be even more disturbing than that of theatrical women, and the edict was rescinded four years later.

Orgel, *Nobody's Perfect*, p. 8.

¹⁴ The main sources to be frequently cited are (in chronological order): Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse* (London, 1579); John Northbrook, *A Treatise Wheirin Dauncing, Valne Playes or Enterludes are Reproved* (London, 1579); Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (London, 1583); William Rankins, *A Mirrour of Monsters* (London, 1587); Stephen Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Five Acts* (London, 1590); John Rainolds, *Th' Overthrow of Stage Players* (London, 1599) and William Prynne, *The Unlovelinesse of Love-Lockes* (London, 1628) and *Histrion-Mastix*, (London, 1633).

¹⁵ As mentioned above, given the iconic and semi-deified status given to Michel Foucault in the New Historicism, most critics — queer theorists such as Stephen Orgel amongst them — have thus far lined themselves up with the notion expressed in Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* that homosexuality (as a sexual orientation) is a post-enlightenment concept. Queer theorists and historians from Alan Bray onwards (see his *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982 – and Reprint, 1988)) have therefore rather sought to stress the performance of particular sexual acts rather than a permanent sexuality (or orientation) and the consequent possibility of homo-erotic subjectivity.

There have, however, been notable exceptions to this general trend. See, for example, Joseph Cady, "'Masculine Love,'" Renaissance Writing, and the "New Invention" of homosexuality', in *Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment England*, edited by Claude Summers (New York and London: The Hawthorn Press, 1992), pp. 9 – 40. Cady points out in this article the existence of a discourse of 'masculine love' as a prominent language that was used to articulate male homosexual orientation. Janel Mueller, too, in 'Troping Utopia: Donne's brief for lesbianism', in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, texts, images*, edited by James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: CUP, 1993)) attempts to analyse the ways in which Donne 'undertakes to imagine the pleasures, sustenance, and ideological implications by which *lesbianism, as a mode of loving and being*, resists patriarchal disposition and [the] diminution of women' (my italics).

¹⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) has recently debated the degree to which certain givens of gender were performance based in everyday life.

¹⁷ Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization 1579 - 1642*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p 10.

¹⁸ The passage in question in Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse* [sig. B7^r] runs as follows:

Plutarch complaineth, that ignorant men not knowyng the maiestie of auncient musick, abuse both the cares of the people, and the Arte itselfe: with bringing sweete consortes into theaters, which rather effeminate the mind, as prickes unto vice, then procure amendment of maners, as spurres to vertue.

¹⁹ This idea is articulated throughout Margot Heinemann's seminal *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

²⁰ I borrow the term 'play-boy' – of course – from Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters* (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983), especially pp. 9 - 36.

Chapter I:

Breaking Down the 'One-sex' Anatomical Model: Early Modern Corporal Science and the Emergence of Sexual Difference

[In the theatre,] Men are emasculated; all the honour and vigour of their sex is abated by the filthiness of an effeminated body [...] and he there gives best content who doth most dissolve himself into a woman [...] ¹

William Prynne, Anti-Theatricalist
Histrio-Mastix (London, 1633).

Hippocrates seems to attribute to passionate love the power of transforming women into men; where he sayes, that in the citty *Abdera*, *Phæthusa*, being stricken with the love of *Pytheus* and not being able to enjoy him for a long time, by reason of his absence, she became a man [...] and grew hairy all over her body, had a man's voyce and a long beard on her chin [...] ²

Jacques Ferrand, Doctor of Medicine
De la Maladie de L'Amour (Paris, 1623).

As for the authority of *Hippocrates*. It followeth not that all those women whose voyces turne strong or have beards and grow hairy do presently also change their parts of generation, neither doth *Hippocrates* say so, but plainly the contrary: for he addeth, "when we had tried all meanes we could not bring down her courses, but she perished" wherefore her parts of generation remained those of a Woman, although her bodye grew mannish and hairie [...] ³

Helkiah Crooke, Anatomist
A Description of the Body of Man (London, 1615).

I

Any survey of early modern corporal philosophy must certainly take into consideration the works of Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen. Doctrines based on ancient Greek and Roman physiology dominated anatomical discourse from the middle ages, through the exponential increase in dissection that took place in mid-sixteenth century Italy, and up to the corporal science that was synchronic to the construction of London's first professional theatres during the fifteen-seventies. The first-half of the sixteenth century also saw a prolific revision and re-editing of ancient medical texts by a range of early modern European humanists, and it is evident that (despite enormous advances towards what resemble more modern theories) sixteenth and even some early-seventeenth century works of comparative and human anatomy clearly took Hippocratic, Aristotelian and Galenic paradigms as their starting points or, as time progressed, as the most respected classical authorities to be contested and refuted. Even the works of the three great successive chairs of anatomy at the

University of Padua: Andreus Vesalius, Renaldo Columbus and Gabriel Fallopio (the physicians who are generally considered to have changed the course of Renaissance corporal science) were clearly mediated through commentary and analysis of ancient authority, despite their increasingly frequent attempts to dispute or disprove classical methodologies and epistemologies.⁴ Sex-identity was no exception to this general rule.

Greek (and, in the works of Galen, Roman) physiology also clearly commanded great influence over popular literary culture during the Renaissance. Anatomy was, in many ways, *la moelle substantive* of life itself, as may be demonstrated by Rabelais' referral of his readers to a diet of classical anatomy before they graduate to consumption of his own chimerical grotesques. The 1535 prologue to *Gargantua* therefore (somewhat ironically) counsels study of both Galen's Latin *iii Fac. natural* and *xi de usu parti* before the reader delves into the author's own fictive French *oeuvre*, the somewhat anthropophagistic premise behind which being:

it behoves you to be wise enough to sniff out and access these books, to be light footed in pursuit and bold in the encounter; then by careful reading and frequent meditation, break the bone and suck out the substantific [sic] marrow[...]⁵

Equally (and as will be seen in chapter two below), the proper noun 'Galen' and references to Galenic medicine appear no less than five times in four separate Shakespearean plays as a supposed benchmark of medical authority.⁶

In relation to what would today be termed biological sex, then, much has recently been made of the fact that the theories of the ancients considered female reproductive organs to be simple internalised inversions of male genitalia (Galen) and that woman herself was an



Figure 1

First printed delineation of the uterus (1493)

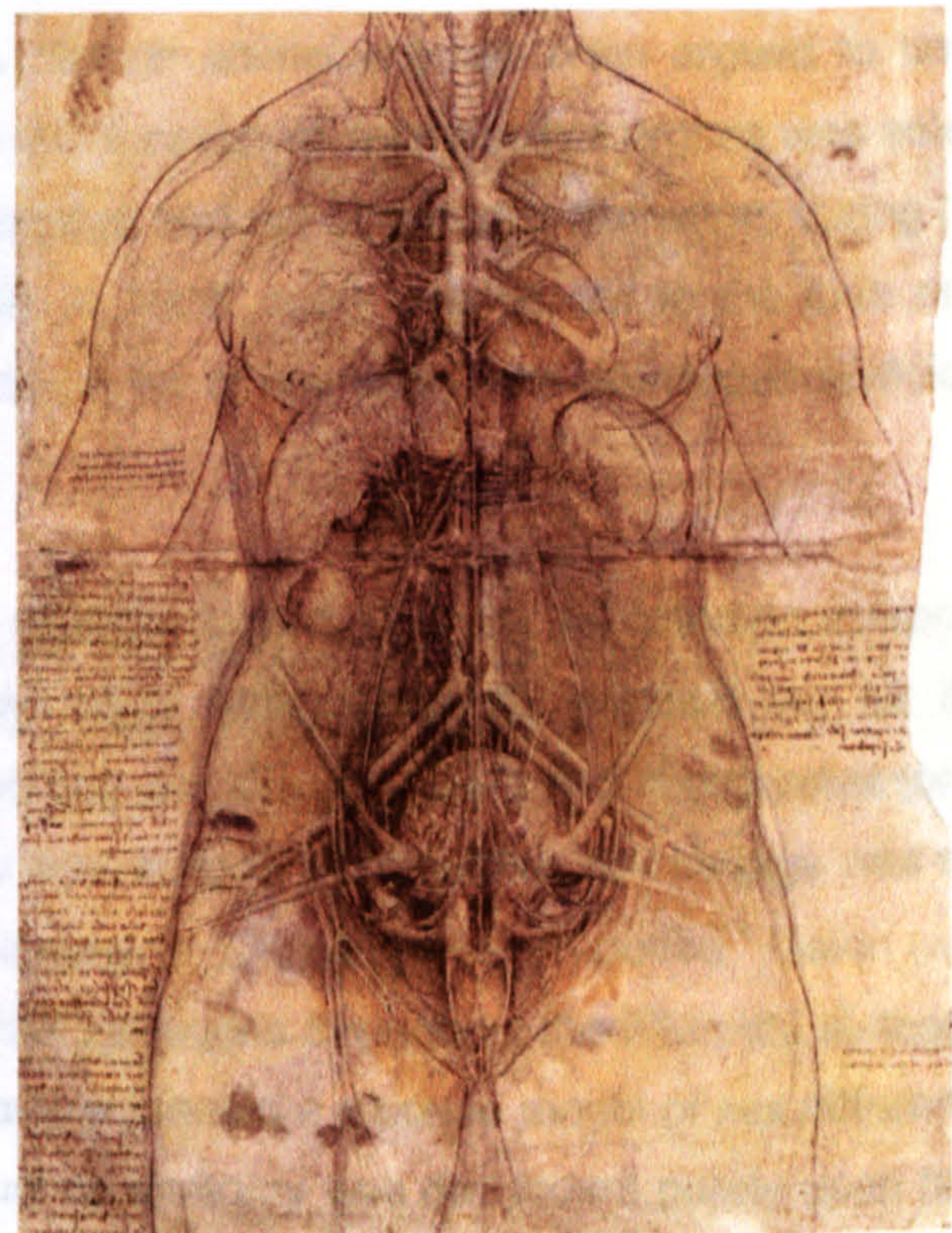


Figure 2

Leonardo da Vinci, The Principal Organs and Vascular and Urino-genital systems of a Woman (circa 1507)
Windsor Leoni volume (12281)

un-perfected version of the male (Aristotle); this is the heat based, 'internalised phallus' or 'one-sex' anatomical model that Thomas Laqueur (amongst others) has recently argued to have been dominant well into the late seventeenth century.⁷

Within classical anatomical discourse, the 'imperfection' of a woman's internalised 'genitalia' was explained as having arisen due to a lack of sufficient heat (during foetal development) for her penis, scrotum and testicles to be pushed forwards and out of her body. Lack of heat then became characteristic of the female humours (that were cold and wet and normally stayed with the woman for life) and the colder female was considered to be predominantly sluggish (and moist) compared to the more active, hot and dry nature of the male. Galen, moreover, after establishing female 'imperfection' as a factor that was due solely to the internalised location of women's genitalia, asserted that they lacked nothing that men had, and developed his famous trope of mole's eyes in comparison to a woman's reproductive organs within her body. Thomas Laqueur has summarised Galen's somewhat lengthy simile as follows:

The eyes of the mole have the same structure as the eyes of other animals except that they do not allow the mole to see. They do not open, "nor do they project but are left there imperfect." So too the female genitalia "do not open" and remain an imperfect version of what they would be were they thrust out. The mole's eyes thus "remain like the eyes of other animals while they are still in the uterus" and so, to follow this logic to its conclusion, the womb, vagina, ovaries and external pudenda remain forever as if they were still inside the womb. They cascade vertiginously back inside themselves, the vagina an externally, precariously, unborn penis, the womb a stunted scrotum and so forth [...]⁸

This theory (which is also found in Aristotle's *historia animalium*) has been argued to have inevitably led on to the supposition that, since the location of reproductive organs was solely dependent on heat, the perfective transformation that had not occurred in the womb during the foetal development of a girl could (theoretically at least) occur subsequent to the birth of a female child, provided that – through some bizarre act of exertion – she developed sufficient heat at some subsequent stage of her life.

As a result of accepting such a linear model of reproductive anatomy as common currency during the Renaissance, contemporary literary critics have frequently reached out for the anecdotal examples of post-natal transformation that are cited by Galen and Hippocrates (or in Montaigne and Paré) in order to argue that the possibility of spontaneous sex-change was still the centre of much medical and philosophical interest in the early modern period.⁹ Galen (who was translated from Latin into all major European languages throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) is thus argued to have presented a mutable model of sex difference (similar to that of the Greeks) in which reproductive anatomy was dependent purely upon *heat* and location. Galenic anatomy is argued to have repeatedly stated (as did Aristotelian and Hippocratic) that there was no part of the male's externalised reproductive anatomy that did not have its homologue internalised within the female, the two sets of reproductive organs being ubiquitously mapped onto each other with precision in late medieval and Renaissance anatomical texts and their illustrative diagrams (see, for example, Figs. 1 & 2 above). As has also been

repeatedly pointed out in much current critical discourse, Galen detected little difference between male and female reproductive organs in terms of their *function*: in *de semine*, for example, he states that the female has testicles that are capable of producing sperm in order that it might mix with the sperm of a male during the act of generation (and thereby engender a foetus inside the womb). Aristotle's *de generatione animalium*, likewise, defined sex-difference not according to a variance in external genitalia or internal reproductive organs, but simply as a result of the fact that the male generates without his body whereas the female does so within.

From the writings of Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen, then, a 'one-sex' anatomical model is argued to have been established and affirmed (between the fifth century BC and the second century AD) in which woman was rendered an incomplete variant of man, her reproductive biology existing not in its own right but rather in a foetal state of under development that was attendant upon heat for its perfection towards masculinity. Whilst this is inarguably the framework within which early-Renaissance reproductive anatomy was initially conceived, what I would like to assert in this chapter as being much less certain, is the fact that a 'Galenic one-sex' paradigm maintained its position of intellectual and popular pre-eminence throughout the entire early modern period.

II

The first comprehensive human anatomy to be written during the English Renaissance was Thomas Vicary's *The Anatomy of the Body of Man*. First published in 1545, the title page of the 1587 (memorial) edition of the work proclaims its author to have been:

Sergeant Chirurgian to King Henry the 8. To King Edward the 6. To Queene Mary. And to our Souveraigne Lady Queene Elizabeth and also chiefe chirurgion to S. Bartholemewes Hospitall [...]¹⁰

Despite the impressive biography, its author was in actual fact Professor of Anatomy at the (rather more prestigious) University of Padua; because Vicary's *Body of Man* (like most mid-sixteenth century European anatomies) was a loose translation of Andreus Vesalius' *de humani corporis fabrica* (Basel, 1543).

Turning to the sections which deal with sex-identity, the first edition of *The Body of Man* contains a description of female reproductive organs that is startling in the degree to which it appears (on first reading at least) to be derivative of Galen, despite being written more than a millennium later. At first glance, *The Body of Man* reveals that Vicary's English version of the *fabrica* had changed little of the received Galenic wisdom on sex-identity, and that it still seemed to posit a version of female reproductive biology that was mediated through a mapping and translation of non-sex-specific corollaries that were proper to both the male and the female of the human species. However (and despite the fact that Vicary chose to express his

understanding of reproductive biology in terms of *similarity* between the exterior of man and the interior of woman), *closer* reading of *The Body of Man* reveals that just beneath the surface of this text (and therefore evidently nagging at the logic of this mid-sixteenth century physician) the Galenic system of *exact* homology was beginning to break down into a much weaker scheme of comparison, metaphor and simile in mainland Europe (and therefore in England) by 1545. As I now intend to demonstrate, Vicary's language (like that of many subsequent European anatomies) in actual fact goes a significant way towards delineation of quasi-essentialist notions of anatomical difference, and begins to set up discrete male and female exemplars for the human reproductive organs.

That an unquestioned acceptance of Galenic paradigms should be seen to break down in Vicary's treatise is not really all that surprising, however, given that *The Body of Man* was, essentially, a loose translation of the *fabrica*. As I have noted in my introduction, as early as 1543 Vesalius had himself been at pains to distance himself from a Galenic vision of female reproductive anatomy that was derived solely in relation to that of the male, and had categorically asserted that 'Galen never inspected a human uterus' whilst also calling to attention the fundamental errors of female biology that he saw as central to the three major Galenic texts on the subject: *on the Use of Parts*, *on Semen* and *on Dissection of the Uterus*.¹¹

In Vicary, therefore, we read of the womb:

The Matrix in women is an officiall member, compound and nervous, and in complexion cold and drye: and it is the feelde of mans generation, and it is an instrument susceptible, that is to say, a thing receiving or taking: and her proper place is betweene the bladder and the gut Longaon, the likeness of it, is as it were a yard reversed or turned inwarde, having testikles likewise [...] (Vicary, 58 [sic])¹²

This passage obviously emphasises the fact that the uterus, womb and ovaries are roughly the same size and shape as the externalised penis and scrotum of the male, that they differ in location (they are situated inside the body rather than thrust outside it); yet its linguistic *subtext* can also be seen to wear away at any underlying sense of *exactitude* in the homology between male and female reproductive anatomies.

GENERATIONIS ORGANA,
NA, SUPERIVS VIRI, INFERIVS MULIERIS.
Tertia figura fœmen, deferentium v. efferum implans assenem refert.

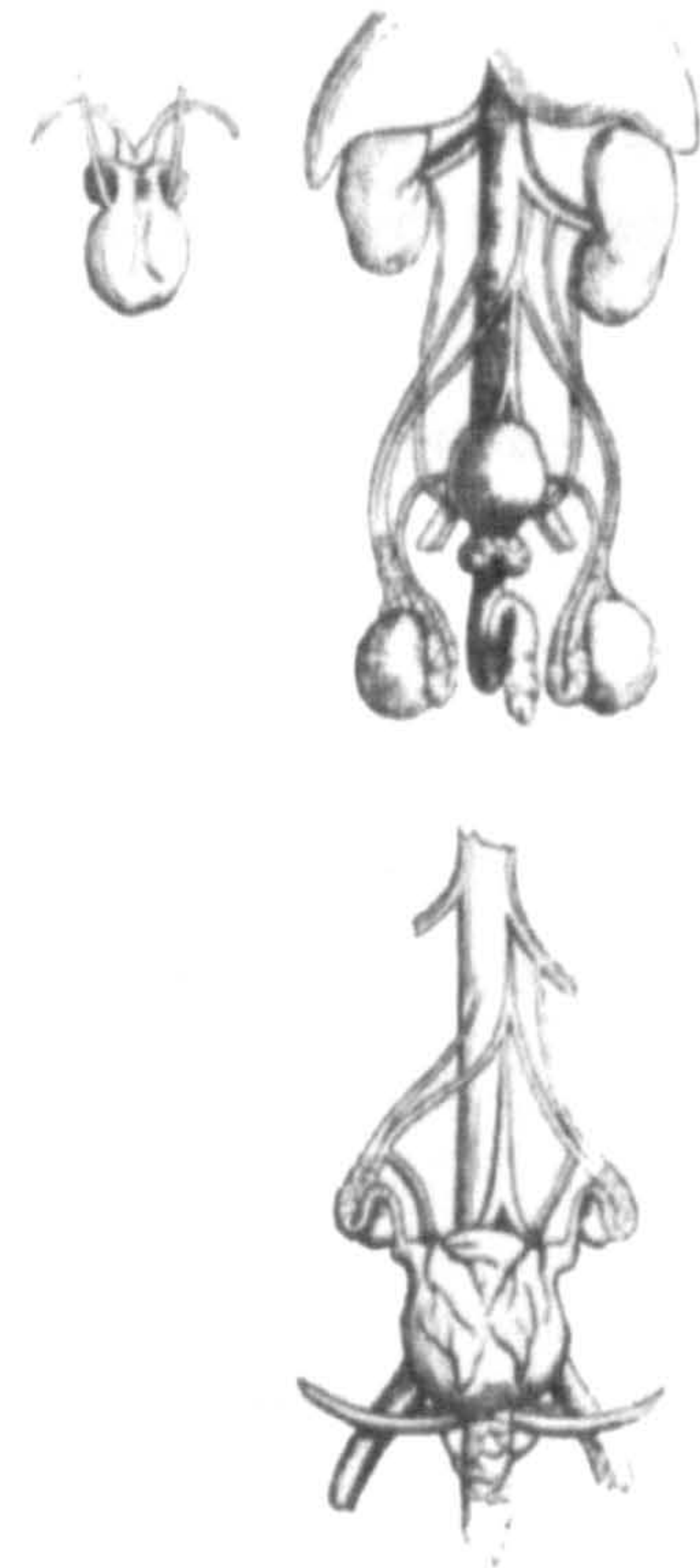


Figure 3

Detail of Male and female genitalia from
Vesalius' *tabulae anatomicae* (1538)

Note, for example, that when comparison is made to the male reproductive organs, the matrix (or womb) is served by the feminine possessive adjective 'her'; that it is deemed to be an 'official member' (existing in its own right); that it is perceived to be 'an instrument susceptible' (it 'receives' seed rather than ejaculating it); and that similitude rather than homogeneity is invoked both in the phrase 'as it were' and in the direct simile of 'the likeness of it, is as it were.' Also, when female humours are mentioned, Vicary quite remarkably attributes to the womb a 'dry'-ness instead of the received Galenic dampness; thereby indicating – perhaps – a sense of biological 'completion' akin to the conventional male's 'hot' and 'dry' state.

Later, in a section 'of the matrix in women' (in which Vicary expounds the function of the female 'testicles' or ovaries), the fallopian tubes are described as 'semen ducts' (like those attached to the testicles within the male scrotum); yet, once again, male and female exemplars are separated by the clear notion of *difference* that is posited in Vicary's observation that the two sets of vessels are of *un*-equal length:

In the sydes of the vtter mouth [...] are two testikles or stones, and also two vessels of *sparme shorter then mans vessels*, and in the tyme of coyt the womans sparme is shed down to the bottome of the Matrix [...] (Vicary, 49 - my italics)

These female 'stones' are also (and this is crucial) *not* considered to be located *within* the matrix as the male testicles are within the scrotum (a fact which may also be noted in visual representations of the ovaries in late medieval and early Renaissance sketches that date from the first delineation of the womb and uterus onwards (again, see Figures 1 & 2 above) and more markedly in Vesalius' own *tabulae anatomicae* of 1543 (fig. 3 above)). Such a fact (if nothing else in the language of the treatise) immediately renders Laqueur's notion of 'the vagina [as] an externally, precariously, unborn penis, the womb a stunted scrotum' all but impossible; for if such a 'vertiginous' vagina and womb were to descend in order to form a penis and scrotum, what would happen to these external 'stones', that are *not* retained within the so called 'scrotum' of the womb? Likewise, what might become of *vas deferens* that were too short to suffer 'testicular' descent?

Although in the section 'On the act of generation' the reader comes across the notion that the processes undergone to conceive are perceived as being *similar* for men and women (including the assumption that ejaculation is an essential female act during copulation if a child is to be conceived (see Fig. 4 over)), it should also be noted that the *exactness* of the similarity (that is so frequently insisted upon) had clearly broken down by the time Vicary wrote his English version of the *fabrica*.

Whilst it is true to say that there is no concept of a cycle of ovulation in *The Body of Man* (women are deemed to ejaculate sperm, as men do, during of the act of coitus) and that sperm is itself considered to be made in the same manner by both women and men (perfected blood, drawn from every part of the body, is stored in the male or female 'testicles' until conception, at

which point it is mixed together – at the same moment – in the female's womb and is then worked upon in order to create an embryo:

[...] the which seede of generation commeth from all the parts of the bodie, both of the man and the woman, with content and will of all members, and is shed into the place of conceiving, where thorowe the vertue of Nature it is gathered together in the selles of the Matrix of the mother, in whom by the way of the working of mans seede, and by the way of suffering of the womans seede mixt together; so that each of them worketh in other and suffreth in other, there is engendered Embryon [...] (Vicary, 49)

an essential notion of *difference* is also clearly articulated here (in both the *nature* of this semen and its *function*). Female semen is unambiguously described by Vicary as having no less than four 'contrarie qualities': it is *colder*, *weaker* and *thinner* than that of the male. It is also, presumably, of a *different colour* since Vicary is later at pains to draw attention to the 'white' nature of male semen:

this sparne that cometh both of man and womā, is made and gathered of the most best and purest drops of blood in all the bodie, and by the labour and chasting of the Testikles or Stones this blood is turned into another kinde, and is made sparne. And in the man it is hot, white and thicke; wherfore it may not be spread nor runne abroad of it selfe, but runneth and taketh temperance of the womans sparne, which hath cōtrarie qualities: for the womans sparne is thinner, colder and feeblor [...] (Vicary, 49)

Set against the previous quotation's central insistence that female sperm 'suffers' and is 'worked upon' by male semen, one may therefore observe that Vicary is here not all that far away from a biologically essentialist notion that the male's sperm fertilises the female's egg (a substantive difference between the nature, form and function of male and female 'semen' that was enough to save a woman's life by the turn of the seventeenth century, as I will demonstrate below in the case of Marie le Marcis).¹³



Figure 4

Coition of Hemisected Man and Woman
(Circa 1492 - 4) Provenance: Windsor Leoni Volume 12281

(Showing the early Renaissance notion of dual ejaculation and the vascular systems for the perfection of blood into semen).

The idea that simultaneous ejaculation of male and female sperm was essential to conception undoubtedly came to Da Vinci, Vesalius and Vicary via Galen. Yet, progressing through the treatises of the sixteenth century, readers may easily begin to observe the way in which direct anatomical observation (arising from the dissection of real human subjects, an activity first undertaken precisely *during* this period) was leading to the modification and refinement of the errors that had been inherent in classical *comparative* anatomy. Ocular proof, attained at the expense of eviscerated human cadavers, was central to a repudiation of epistemologies that had developed conceptions of human anatomy *a priori* from those of animals and this significant difference was, in many ways, the pride of early modern anatomists who, despite appropriating the Greek motto γνῶθι σεαυτόν, now attempted to out-do the anatomical science of their classical forbears (even if they did fall back on another classical maxim *quoniam sensus non fallitur circa proprium objectum* in order to do so).¹⁴



ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ

Figure 5

Dissection scene inscribed 'know thyself' in Greek from *Anatomia practica rationalis* (Amsterdam, 1688)

Thus, although in Grévin's 1569 French anatomy *Les Portraits Anatomiques de Toutes les Parties Du Corps Humain*, the theory of dual orgasm and ejaculation as essential to conception is still articulated:

Lors que la semence de l'homme est iectee en l'amary de la femme, il faut aussi necessairement que celle de la femme y soit iectee en mesme instant pour faire la conception, autrement rien ne se fera [...] ¹⁵

(When the semen of the man is ejaculated into the womb of the woman, that of the woman must necessarily also be ejaculated there at the same moment in order to conceive, otherwise, nothing will come of it [...])¹⁶

Vesalius, Vicary and Grévin tacitly undermine the prevalence of a Galenic 'heat-constitutes-sex' paradigm in the process of gestation. In his account of the subsequent process of foetal development Vicary, for example, goes on to observe:

some authors hold opinion, when this matter is gathered into the right side of the Matrix, then it happeneth a male kind and likewise on the left the female [...] (Vicary, 49)

a comment in which a supposedly *dominant* classical epistemology (in which birth-sex was determined by foetal position and therefore simply according to the level of *heat* experienced

within a divided womb) is relegated to the opinion of 'some authors'. What is even *more* interesting to ponder, however (even taking 'some authors' at face value, following Laqueur's 'logic' to its conclusion, and considering the fact that woman was capable of creating and containing heat strong enough to engender masculinity in at least one part of her womb), is whether such temperatures might not *logically* be sufficient to thrust forward female reproductive organs and to 'perfect' a woman each time she carried and delivered a male child?

Only five years after the first publication of Vicary's *Body of Man*, a new English anatomy (this time an edition of Gemnius' *compendiosa totius anatome delineato*, of which numerous Latin versions had been in circulation in England since 1545) appeared in a translation by Nicholas Udall. Published in London in 1553 under the title *A Treatise of Anatomy*, Udall's choice of language again reveals that an *essential* difference between the womb and the scrotum now appeared to be *divinely* ordered:

The Matrix or chambre in woman is an officiall membre compound and full of synowes and in complexion colde and drye, and it is the house or receptacle of mans generation being *ordeyned* to receave, take, conserve and nouryshe the seede of man. It is situat [sic] betwene the Bladder, and the streyght entrailes [...] ¹⁷

Elsewhere in the *compendiosa* we read again that ovaries are perceived to be located *outside* the womb and that fallopian tubes are *un*-equal in length to the male spermatic vessels:

Ferdermore, in the sydes of the outer mouthe of the Matrix within, are two tisticles [sic], or stones with two seede vessels also, which seede vessels are shorter then the seede vessels in man, whiche in the acte or worke of generation, shed downe the sparne into the bottome of the Matrix [...] (Udall, sig. Aiiij^r)

also significant, despite the fact that it is still thought essential for the 'seed' of a woman to be mixed with the 'seed' of a man in order for a foetus to be conceived

(Embrio therefore [...] is a thyng engendered in the mothers wombe, the origynall whereof is the seede of man and of woman together [...] (Udall, sigs. Aiiij^r/Aiiij^v),

is the fact that readers are once again informed of the clear disparity between the *products* of male and female testicles. Likewise, in the anatomist Lemnius' theory of familial resemblance, there is an almost complete difference between the properties of male and female sperm:

C'est une opinion assuree & par plusieurs raisons cōfermee entre les medecins, que si la femme rend plus abondamment de semence que le mari, l'enfant ressemblera à la mere: mais si le mari en rend plus que la femme, il ressemblera au pere: & s'ils rendent également en pareille mesure, en forces assemblees, il ressemblera à l'un & à l'autre [...] ¹⁸

(It is a certain opinion, and by many reasons established among doctors, that if the wife produces semen more abundantly than the husband, the child will take after the mother: but if the husband produces more of it than the wife, then it will take after the father: and if they both produce equally, in like quantity and strength, it will take after the one and the other [...])

If female and male testicles are equivalent and produce the same fluid; if the nature of masculinity and femininity is only dependent upon the development of heat in the womb, then why should the quantity of like sperms produced by either parent be of any importance to the constitution or physical form of the child?

Lemnius, in contrast to Vicary, does not cast doubt on the Galenic paradigm of a divided womb but rather describes it as being separated into two sections, each of which has a different heat (the left side, dull, sluggish and the site of the development of female children; the right of superior heat, making it the situation of virile embryonic development) yet, since this theory begs the question as to whether it is possible for a foetus to adhere to neither one nor to the other side of the womb (and therefore as to the determination of sex in a foetus that is displaced within the womb during pregnancy or one which never properly adheres to either side), the existence of *absolute* notions of anatomical difference is once again tacitly questioned in a chapter on hermaphrodites, in which Lemnius asserts that a dual sexed child may be produced when:

la semence ne tire ny en l'une ny en l'autre partie [de la matrice] à ceste cause les semences entre elles cōfuses engederet un Hermaphrodite, lequel quād il est cōceu, prent ses forces & sa forme ores du costé droit, ores du gauche & l'ayde de l'un & de l'autre, de la prouienet le sexe double en une personne des Androgines ou Hermaphrodites, qui est un nō formé de Mercure & Venus [...] (Lemnius, 63)

(the semen pulls neither towards one, nor to the other part [of the womb], due to which, the semens confused between themselves engender a Hermaphrodite, which when it is conceived takes its forces and its form either from the right side or from the left with the help of one and the other, from whence is derived the double sex in one person of Androgens and Hermaphrodites, which is a name fashioned from Mercury and Venus [...])

Here, confusion of heat in the development of the foetus may be seen to create an infant in whom both sexes are held within one body. But (as the physician Jean Riolan was soon to show in relation to such an argument) how might such a creature as the hermaphrodite exist *at all* within a paradigm in which it was *only* heat that dictated sex? Was the hermaphrodite body considered both hot *and* cold *at the same time* in order for the androgen to possess (both) sets of internalised and externalised genitalia?

Ambroise Paré (c.1510 - 1590), the French *Conseiller et Premier Chirurgien Du Roy* (and a remarkably well respected and published physician in both England and France) is argued by many critics to have articulated the clearest Renaissance acceptance of a Galenic 'one-sex' model. Close reading of his published works, however, reveals once again that a clear sense of ambiguity is present in the linguistic gymnastics that he is obliged to perform in an attempt to assert the *lack* of essential difference between women and men. On the subject of female sex-identity, the definitive *Œuvres* (Paris, 1575) adamantly concludes (somehow feeling it necessary to use the imperative):

Il faut entendre que les vaisseaux spermatiques, & Testicules des femmes ne sont en rien différentes à ceux des hommes quant à leur substance, figure, cōmposition, nōbre, colligance, complexion, origine & utilitie: mais seulement à raison de leur quantité & distribution: car elles les ont plus amples & plus courts [...] ¹⁹

(It must be understood that the spermatic vessels [fallopian tubes] and testicles [ovaries] of women are in no way different to those of men as regards their substance, shape, form, number, attachment, complexion, origin and use: but only in their size and distribution: because they have them larger and shorter [...])

and on the womb and uterus:

L'Amarry [...] est une partie du corps appartenante seulement à la femme, laquelle Nature luy a donnée au lieu du Scrotum à l'homme, comme aussi a fait son col & parties d'iceluy au lieu du membre viril de l'homme: en sorte, que si tu contemples les parties tant de l'homme que de la femme, tu ne les trouveras différentes l'une de l'autre touchant le nombre des parties, ains seulement en diverse situation d'icelles. Car ce que l'homme a au dehors, la femme l'a au dedans, tant par la providence de Nature, que de l'imbécillité d'icelle [...] (Paré 83-84)

(the womb is a part of the body belonging only to woman, which nature has given her in place of the man's scrotum, as it has also given her the uterus and its pertaining parts in place of the man's virile member: so that if you think about the parts of the man and the woman in relation to each other, you won't find them different regarding the number of parts, but only in their differing positions. For that which the man has outside, the woman has inside, as much by the providence of nature as by her idiocy [...])

Yet in this very attempt to insist upon a *lack* of difference, one may observe that Paré is forced to concede *four* essential variances. In his account of the homologous nature of the human reproductive organs, the womb is: a unique organ 'belonging *only* to woman', it is given 'instead of' a scrotum; moreover, female ovaries (and fallopian tubes) differ both in size *and* in location when compared to the male testicles and spermatic vessels.

The frequently cited passage in Chapter VII of Paré's *Œuvres* (in which four independent examples of FTM sex-change are quoted) is itself illuminating if for nothing else because in it the physician remarks that such instances are '*memorable stories of certain women who degenerated into men*' [my italics] (*Histoires memorables de certaines femmes qui sont degenerées en hommes* (Paré 814)). The section includes the almost over-discussed story of Marie Germain, the twenty-two-year-old female pig-herd from Vitry-le François whose penis and scrotum suddenly 'burst forth' as s/he was vaulting over a ditch (an anecdote that also appears in Montaigne's travel journal for September 1580).²⁰ However, far from being a familiar case that is un-problematically assimilated within a dominant anatomical paradigm that can comfortably allow for such corporal vicissitude, the phenomenon of Germain's sexual transmogrification is considered to be so incredible that it had to be verified by the physician's own eyes (because Paré admits making significant efforts to meet this bizarre subject). Equally, accounts of the sociological *response* to Germain's mutation (in both Paré *and* Montaigne) reveal that the secular and ecclesiastical oligarchies of northern France were far from blithe in their embrace of this FTM 'perfection'. Marie's sexual metamorphosis was met with both consternation and incredulity and, despite examination by several eminent physicians, it was *still* felt necessary to call the subject before a senior ecclesiastical figure (the Cardinal Bishop of Lenuncure according to Paré, or the Bishop of Soissons in Montaigne) so that what had been considered a girl could be publicly forced to undergo ritual sanctification (enacted through illocutionary speech acts and performative rituals) before [s]he could legitimately appropriate 'his' new masculine name and attire. Paré reaches back to Galenic anatomy for his justification of the case:

La raison pourquoy les femmes se peuvent degenerer en hommes, c'est que les femmes ont autant de caché dedans le corps, que les hommes decouvriront dehors: rest seulement qu'elles n'ont pas tât de chaleur ny suffisante pour poulser dehors ce que par la froidure de leur temperature est tenue comme lié au dedans [...] (Paré, 815)

(The reason why women can degenerate into men is that women have as much hidden inside the body as men discover outside: only that they do not possess enough or sufficient heat to push out that which by the coldness of their temperature is held as if tied inside [...])

yet *despite* his assertion, it is obvious that the whole business was considered deeply *unnatural*; it was a violation of nature that was almost considered a monstrosity, and hence Paré's choice of the term 'degenerate' that has startled critics so much.²¹ As we will see in the work of Jean Riolan below, it was not long before medical science was to return to the problematic case of Marie Germain in order to come up with a much more plausible (and non-transformatory) account of the anatomical questions pertaining to this startling anecdote.

In his declaration that female reproductive organs are normally held as *if* tied inside (*comme lié au dedans*) Paré is caught in the act of manifestly struggling with his rhetoric in an effort to render material facts (muscles, bands, stays) into simile; and, despite the fact that he combines the weakness of some women's withholding force with the above noted fact that it is 'all in there' homologously mapped against a male exemplar, the military surgeon still feels it necessary to counteract a pre-empted incredulity from his audience and therefore resorts to a somewhat syntactically twisted assertion: 'it is not a thing unbelievable' that such development of heat should counteract the ethereal withholding forces that prevented Marie Germain's penis, scrotum and testicles from emerging in their virile form:

Par-quoy si avec le temps l'humidité de l'enfance qui empeschoit la chaleur de faire son plein devoir, estant pour la plus part exhalée, la chaleur est rendue plus robuste, acre, & active, ce n'est chose incroyable qu'icelle principalement aidée de quelque mouvement violent, ne puisse poulsier dehors ce qui estoit caché dedans [...] (Paré 815)

(By which, if with time the dampness of childhood that was hindering the heat from doing what it should being mostly exhaled, the heat was rendered more robust, pungent and active, it is not a thing unbelievable that this, helped by some violent movement, might not have pushed outside that which was hidden inside [...])

As with most cases of abnormal anatomy (or rare instances of anatomical transformation), then, the Germain incident displays a clear instance of cognitive dissonance in the minds of both the physicians, and the lay and ecclesiastical officials who come into contact with this (decidedly) *unusual* subject (together with a clear expectation that readers will disbelieve this story); and yet the anecdote constitutes what is, perhaps, the single strongest non-mythological assertion of the possibility of sexual transformation to be recorded during the Renaissance. As such, it is interesting to pause and note that even here one finds a clear refutation of Levine's interpretation of anti-theatrical fears of MTF dissolution. Paré, like all his contemporaries (and even as far back as the Greeks) is at pains to assert as forcefully as possible that the reverse is a biological impossibility:

[...] nous ne trouvōs jamais en histoire veritable que d'homme aucun soit devenue femme, pource que nature tend tousiours à ce qui est le plus parfait, & non au contraire faire ce qui est parfait devienne imparfait [...] (Paré, 815)

(we never find a true story of any man becoming a woman, because nature always tends towards that which is the most perfect, and does not, on the contrary, make that which is perfect become imperfect [...])

I conclude this section with one last quotation that is intended to elucidate the evident breakdown of a homologous vagina-as-penis model of female reproductive biology in the mid-sixteenth century. It comes from *Guydo's Questions*, an anatomical treatise written in 1579 in the genre of a conversation between the physician, Guido de Cauliaco, and an unnamed student:

Question: Of what shape is the matrice?

Answer: It is the shape of the instrument of the generation of men, for it is proportionally made to the yard and coddes of mans genitours, except that it is reversed, and is hollow within for to receive mannes yard in the time of copulation, for the necke of the matrice is lyke a mannes yard, and the matrice within is lyke coddes or purse of the genitals of men. And as men have two ballockes or stones that passe and appeare outwarde, so have woemen inwarde, except that they bee bigger in the man, then in the woman [...] ²²

De Cauliaco in 1579 (like Vicary in 1545) is forced to reduce the literality of the 'one-sex' model to simile: his subject's uterus is therefore 'lyke 'a mannes yard', her matrice 'lyke coddes'. What is more, this uterus (in contrast to the male penis that has its muscles ubiquitously and clearly described in all treatises), is defined by *hollowness* and represented as the *receptacle* of the phallus, not its homologue; it is made in proportion to a male virile member that is to be precisely accommodated within it.

III

Let us now consider the following quotation from Book III, Chapter LVII of Phillip Barrough's 1583 *The Methode of Physicke*:

We say, that the matrice falleth out when it is so turned downward, that it sticketh out outwardly. And yet the whole matrice rowleth not down, being losened from the bands and ligaments, as many unwise folk do think, for if it should fall down so, it could not be restored againe. Although the wōb do fall out but seldome, yet there be many causes of the falling out of it [...] ²³

It is illuminating and worth pausing over for two reasons: firstly, because it comes from a less academic and more practical work than the treatises to which reference has thus far been made (and is perhaps therefore a step nearer to popular culture) and secondly, because it is noteworthy for its pragmatic tone of transparent practicality. The author considers a prolapsed uterus as a medical complaint, admits that it is a condition that affects a reasonable number of women, yet concedes that it is, for the most part, reversible.²⁴ There is in no part of this passage (nor in the section from which it comes) an interpretation of the phenomenon as a failed sex change or an aborted FTM 'perfection'. Indeed those who might interpret the passage as such are roundly condemned as 'unwise folk' by its author. Barrough instances a prolapsed uterus as a condition that may be treated medically, like any other, so that the womb can be restored to its rightful place. There is an unambiguous account of the bands and ligaments

which hold it in place (the very muscles which Paré sought to render metaphorical in his account of Marie Germain) and *no* intimation at all that a Galenic increase in heat is responsible for having pushed these organs outside of the female subject's body.

What is perhaps even *more* noteworthy, however, is the fact that Barrough's patient is consistently referred to as a 'woman' throughout. Even when the physician is forced to remove a womb (and/or uterus) that have remained outside the body long enough to become infected, Barrough still advises his pupils, with deliberate reference to classical authority:

you must cut of and seare that which is unprofitable, or burn it without any feare of daunger: for it hath bene knowne (as *Paulus* testifieth) that the whole Matrice, because it was rotted, hath bene taken away, and the woman lyved still [...] (*Barrough*, 153)

Essential to which instruction is the fact that (in the opinion of *both* the early modern Barrough and the ancient Paulus) the patient should be consistently considered as female *despite* a prolapsed uterus, infection and subsequent hysterectomy.

There is no textual (or sub-textual) evidence here to suggest even the slightest hint of failed sexual transformation, rather acknowledgement of a specific gynaecological complaint (that was commonly associated with multiparity). As such, the passage adds to the mounting evidence of an emergent paradigm (and as early as 1583) that deemed the sex-identity of a female subject to be stronger than the movement (and eventual removal) of a defining sexual organ. The difference in tone and attitude between such a passage and those of preceding authors further reinforces the notion that ideas based on a classical 'one-sex' model were becoming irrelevant to almost every anatomical writer in Europe in the lead-up to the seventeenth century. The final 'proof' of essential sex-difference that is frequently instanced in the work of the Dutch anatomists Reinier de Graaf and Karl Ernest Von Baer during the Restoration was therefore evidently a sea-change that had started some hundred years previously, and at least twenty years prior to the turn of the seventeenth century.²⁵

Writing in 1603, Jourdain Guibelet also revealed that it was no longer acceptable to think of woman as un-perfected man, this time from a philosophical standpoint. To do so, he argued in a repudiation of poor Aristotelian logic, would be to accept that the reproduction of the human species was impossible without nature repeatedly making 'mistakes'. In the following quotation, one may therefore (once again) evidence the emergence of the 'two-sex' model that was beginning to gain the intellectual and medical high ground at the turn of the seventeenth century:

si la nature se fouruoye en la generation de la femme, c'est à dire si elle procede contre son intention en ceste production, par ce que son but est tousiours de former l'hōme qui est plus parfait, & que ce fouruoyement soit necessaire: Nous devons attribuer le bien de la production de l'homme à l'erreur de la nature & non à sa prudence, cōsideré qu'il ne peut estre engendré sans la femme. A bon droict dōc ceste opinion comme indigne d'Aristote, a esté banie de l'echole des Medecins, où ayant esté instruit, ie ne fais difficulté de la rejeter [...] ²⁶

(If nature goes astray in the creation of woman, which is to say if she goes against her intention in that production, because her goal is always to make man who is more perfect, and for this going astray to be necessary: We must attribute the good in the creation of man to nature's mistake and not to her prudence, taken into consideration that he cannot be reproduced without woman. With just and legitimate cause, therefore, this opinion, which is beneath Aristotle, has been banished from the medical school where I was taught and I do not find difficulty in rejecting it [...])

Like Guibelet (who was educated at the Sorbonne), it was clearly *not* common practice amongst early-seventeenth-century-English anatomists, physicians and apothecaries to unquestioningly accept a 'one-sex' anatomical model and, concomitantly, to concede the biological potentiality of spontaneous FTM sex-change. As has been noted above, it was certainly *never* thought possible at *any* point during the Renaissance that a man might become a woman. Anatomists as far back as classical Greece had consistently maintained that MTF 'degeneration' was impossible and even those residual teleonomic paradigms that supported some degree of perfective biological vicissitude also maintained that the human body could not 'progress' towards what was, in essence, a less perfect sexual-identity.

IV

It is certainly true to say that one of the first things to strike the reader of early-seventeenth-century medical treatises is the fact that, even late in the period, the same linguistic registers are used to describe discrete organs belonging separately to men and women. The second thing to strike the reader, however, is that as time progresses a plethora of detail becomes added to each basic stem of vocabulary in order to *differentiate* the two bifurcate sexes that were surfacing as a result of emergent dissection science. From around 1590, new (sexually demarcated) prefixes and compound-nouns therefore begin to be regularly employed in a more sophisticated linguistic register that is explicitly intended to set the female *apart* from the male. Such amalgams (as opposed to individual undifferentiated words) were doubtless born out of a need to circumscribe two discrete sexual exemplars as they emerged from the increasing metaphorical 'body of evidence' that was drawn from the literal bodies of human — and especially female — subjects (as opposed to the *a priori* deductive reasoning typical of comparative Galenic anatomy) and whole systems of demarcation may therefore be seen to emerge in the notation, tabulation and elucidation of female reproductive biology from the fifteen-nineties onwards, leading swiftly on to an entirely new linguistic *modus operandi* in which female and male anatomies are clearly set apart from each other.

Whilst it is therefore true to say that passages such as the following (on female fallopian tubes and male semen ducts) may still be evidenced in a treatise of 1615:

The first instruments of generation, are called vasa spermatica, the spermatic vessels. These are larger in men than in women [...] ²⁷

and that a degree of similarity may still be observed in comparisons between testicles and ovaries:

The testicles in men are larger and of a hotter nature then in women; not so much by reason of their situation, as because of the temperament of the whole body, which in women is colder, in men is hotter [...] (Croke, 200)

it proves too reductive by far to consider such references (or those alluding to men's 'paps', the woman's 'yard' and so on) as manifestations of a persistently *undifferentiated* reproductive epistemology post 1600. On the contrary, what is imperative is an acknowledgement that (from at least the turn of the seventeenth century) differences in the *situation, size, number* and *function* of reproductive organs are ubiquitously noted (even if some organs are, at times, named using cognate terminology).

In general then, by 1600, where there had previously only been need for a single undifferentiated noun, the reader of anatomical treatises now encounters modification by masculine or feminine prefixes such as the '*male* virile member', the '*female* virile member' and so on. Such registers certainly demonstrate the persistence of old terminological conventions and vocabularies, but they also witness the development of a *differential* register of nomenclature; systems that must surely have arisen from desires to modify (rather than abandon) scientific precedent and that therefore signify a cultural moment at which the dominant corporal epistemology was moving from one paradigm to another (as well as the fact that anatomists now saw certain parts of male and female anatomy as performing *similar* though not *identical* functions). Moreover, even within a developing system of differentiation-by-sexed-modifier it should also be noted that the common (Anglo-Saxon) names given to both male and female organs often have contrasting Greek or Latin equivalents cited at the beginning of the relevant sections of treatises (or one of several sex-specific versions of the vernacular of which practically all are immediately recognisable today).

The delicate shift from a 'one-sex' to a 'two-sex' paradigm may therefore be tangibly witnessed in the differentiated reproductive terminology that began to operate in a new anatomical discourse that was increasingly marked out along sexually segregated lines. In 1615, when Helkiah Croke indicated a preference for the non-sex-specific term 'yard' in reference to female genitalia, he modified it with the feminine prefix 'woman's' and — crucially — he started his description of 'the woman's yard' by informing his reader that the organ to which he referred was *also* known as the clitoris (thereby instancing a Greek name that clearly referred to a discretely sexed entity):

Clitoris in Greeke *χλιτορις* [sic] cometh of an obscene word signifying contrectation but properly it is called the woman's yard [...] (Croke, 238)

Despite a continued predilection for non-gender-specific — or quasi-masculine — roots such as 'yard', then, *recognition* of sexual difference may also clearly be seen to enter anatomical discourse synchronous to this shift of attention away from the uterus and towards the clitoris as

the penile homologue (because such a distinction is dependent upon comparison of the structure of the clitoris with that of the muscles in the penis that mid-sixteenth-century anatomists had recognised as *absent* in a hollow uterus) – and this is largely why Crooke persists with the term ‘yard’.

The point is made crystal clear in Nicholas Culpeper’s *Directory for Midwives*, in which his description of the form and function of the clitoris clearly precludes any possibility of an internalised female phallus in the form of the uterus:

The clitoris is a sinewy and harde body, full of spongy black matter within, as the side ligaments of the Yard are; in form it represents the yard of a man, and suffers erection and falling as that doth; this is that which causeth delight in copulation, for without this a woman neither desires copulation, or hath pleasure in it, or conceives by it [...] ²⁸

Both Culpeper and Crooke are clear; for them, the female sexual organ that is the closest approximation of the penis is the clitoris.²⁹ And herein lies the final emergence of concrete biological difference, together with a system of physiological differentiation that is based upon something that is clearly recognisable in the light of a modern conception of reproductive anatomy.

In contrast to Da Vinci, Vesalius and Columbus (whom the French physician Jean Riolan observed in 1614 ‘hadn’t recognised the structure of the clitoris [...] as neither [they] nor the other anatomists of [their] day had discovered or knew of [its] admirable structure”), the late-sixteenth-century anatomist had finally found the true corollary of the penis.³⁰ Once it was understood that women possessed clitores that were almost identical to the glans of the penis (but, like the male penis, were located *outside* of the body), the whole question of the uterus-as-internalised-and-inverted-phallus simply disappeared in a puff of logic; and with it, I would argue, went the philosophical possibility of spontaneous sex-change.

As the historian of science progresses through a survey of early-seventeenth century manuals and treatises, then, s/he is consistently faced with dominant versions of female anatomy in which the womb is regarded as an organ unique to women; it is no longer homologous with the scrotum (nor is it located at the end of a vertiginous vulvic penis as Laqueur would like to claim). By 1600, the womb was viewed with integrity (and seen as having its own proper function in the act of gestation) and autonomous female reproductive anatomy was repeatedly expounded upon in detail in treatises, tracts and manuals (the inevitable result of half a century of fervent dissection of the female form) rather than merely dismissed as an inferior [in]version of male anatomy.

With such developments, the possibility (and mention) of sexual transformation almost completely disappears, and cases of biological conversion are therefore only alluded to when an author seeks to refute disproved classical paradigms. By the turn of the seventeenth century, there is little or no mention of the woman’s yard as being internalised due to an

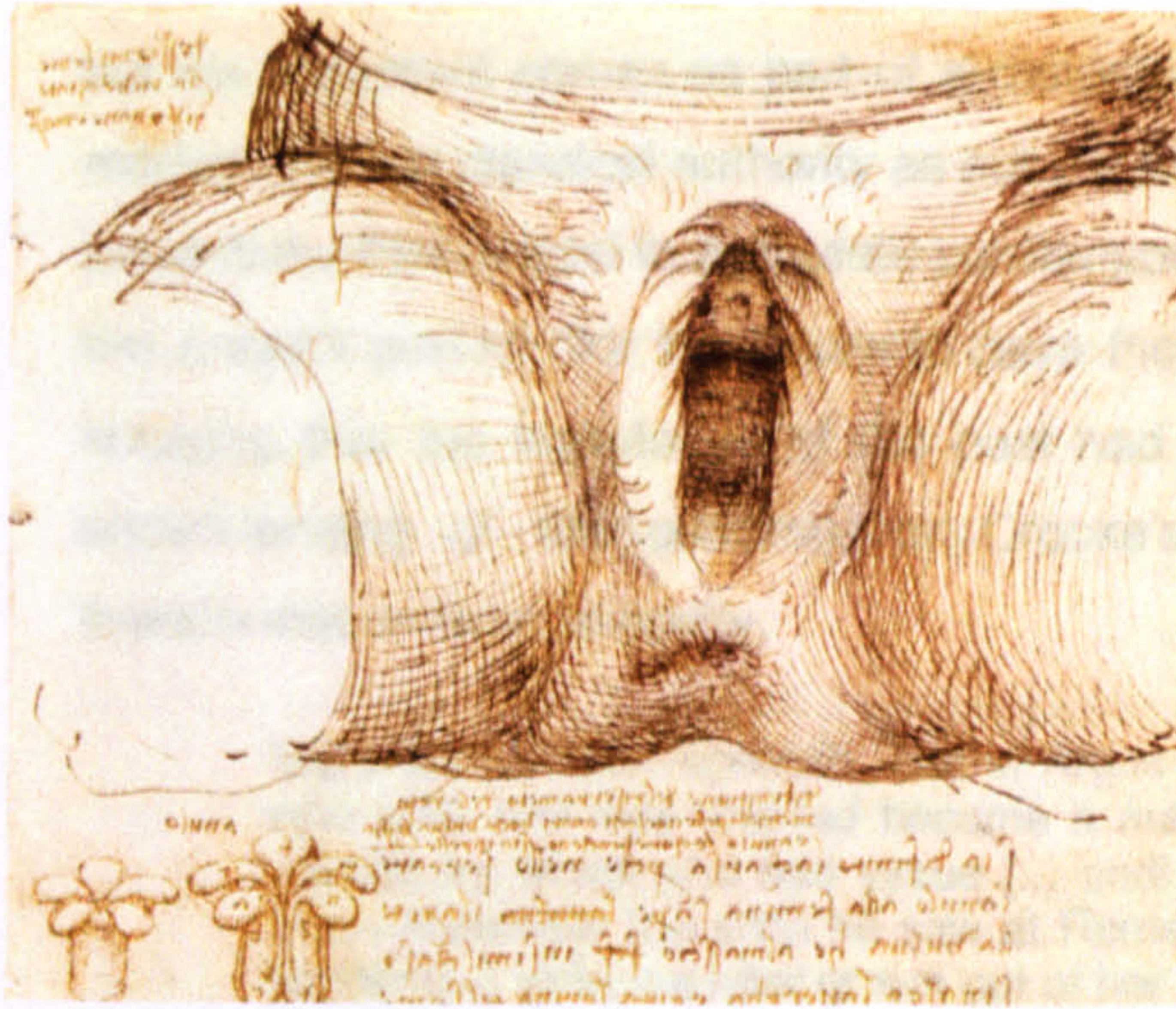


Figure 6

The External Genitalia and Vagina with Diagrams
of the Anal Sphincter (Circa 1508 - 9)
Provenance: Windsor Leoni Volume (19095 - detail)



Figure 7

Detail of the external female genitalia from 'Five
Views of a Foetus in the Womb' (Circa 1510 - 12)
Provenance: Windsor Leoni Volume (19101 - detail)

Despite the detailed examination of the anal sphincter (of which sheet 19095 contains no less than five exploded diagrams), the urethra and the external pudenda—which may be seen in the above illustrations—the early-sixteenth-century anatomist (unlike his late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century counterpart) had completely overlooked the structure of the clitoris

inadequacy of heat. The woman's 'yard' has become recognised as the clitoris. In reference to the Greeks' perceptions of heat, Helkiah Crooke does mention internalised female testicles:

Wherefore heat abounding in men thrusts them [the testicles] forth of the body, whereas in women they remain within, because their dull and sluggish heat is not sufficient to thrust them out [...] (Crooke, 204)

and even informs his readers that there have been "manifold stories of [...] women, whose more active and operative heate hath thrust out their testicles and of women made them men" (Crooke 204), but, as a member of the second generation of Renaissance anatomists, Crooke is at pains to point out that such 'examples' date from the classical period. His 1615 *Microcosmographia*'s sense of anatomical logic thus asserts that an essential sense of biological *difference* exists between men and women, and he flatly *denies* the possibility of a transformation from one sex to another (and therefore frames himself up at complete odds with Hippocrates and Galen in this respect).

Drawing clear boundaries between the opinion of the early-seventeenth century and that of the ancients, Crooke observes that:

Concerning the parts of generation in women, it is a great and notable question whether they differ onely in scituation from those of men. For the ancients have thought that a woman might become a man, but that not on the contrary side a man become a woman [...] (Crooke, 249)

but his statement comes as part of a rhetorical structure that is intended to articulate an early modern view of classical authority as out-moded (because it had been disproved by the detailed dissections that helped to formulate contemporaneous medical opinion). Even despite its use of the present perfect "for the ancients *have thought [...]*" (a tense that has often been read as implying that the knowledge of the past had some direct consequence upon the anatomical understanding of the present), or Crooke's subsequent citation of instances of sexual transformation from antiquity:

Mutianus Licinius reporteth, that in Argus in Greece, he saw a maide named Arestcusa, who after she was married became a man and had a beard and after married another woman by whom she had yssue [... and] Volateran a cardinall saith that in the time of Pope Alexander the sixth he saw at Rome a virgin, who on the day of her marriage had suddenly a virile member grown out of her body [...] (Crooke, 249)

or even a reminder of the inferences that were often drawn from such examples:

Wherefore say they, if a woman may become a man and her parts of generation which before lay hid within may come forth and hang as men's do, then do women differ from men onely in the scite or position of their parts of generation [...] (Crooke, 249)

such examples (and tenses) simply serve a rhetorical purpose (they pose the great and notable question in the minds of his readers) and Crooke stops *well short* of agreeing with ancient theories. In fact (employing the standard rhetorical form of thesis, antithesis and synthesis) what Crooke is actually doing here is citing historical precedent in a scholarly way, before drawing on his own first-hand knowledge as an anatomist in order to conclude that the ancients were in error. The section on sex change in the *Microcosmographia* therefore closes with the observation:

Notwithstanding all this, against this opinion [that of the ancients] there are two mighty arguments: one is taken from autotia in dissection, another from reason, which two are the philosophers bloud-hounds ... First of all [...] these partes in men and women differ in number [...] Again methinks it is absurd to say, that the neck of the womb inverted is like the member of the man [...] Neyther is the cavity of a mans yard so large and ample as the neck of the wombe. Add to this that the neck of the bladder in woman doth not equal the neck of the wombe but in men it equaleth the whole length of the member or yard [...] (Crooke, 249/50)

to which conclusion he adds from the evidence of human dissection that:

howsoever therefore the neck of the womb shall be inverted, yet it will *never* make the virile member [...] (Crooke, 250 - my italics)

In final conclusive support of his assertion, Crooke then proceeds to quote the example of Hippocrates with which this chapter begins (the woman of Abdera who displayed exterior signifiers of masculinity and yet stubbornly retained essential feminine difference):

As for the authority of Hippocrates. It followeth not that all those women whose voyces turne strong or have beards and grow hairy do presently also change their parts of generation, neither doth Hippocrates say so, but plainly the contrary: for he addeth, "when we had tried all meanes we could not bring down her courses, but she perished" wherefore her parts of generation remained those of a Woman, although her bodye grew mannish and hairie [...] (Crooke, 250)

central to which description is the adjective *mannish*. This woman's body is certainly represented as being *like* that of a man (by virtue of an external signifier: body hair) yet both Crooke and Hippocrates recognise that it is not *actually* male *nor can it become* so. Once again, then, Crooke can be seen to operate within a register of similitude in which an external *signifier* does not necessarily denote an interior clinical *state* – and implicit in such a comparison is the fact that there are by this time not one, but two sexes.

So then, although Crook cites examples of sex-change from antiquity as late as 1615, he does so either as a precursor to *disagreement* with them or in order to point out that classical authors must *not* themselves be interpreted as uniformly supporting the plausibility of sexual metamorphosis. Crooke's talk of women's testicles, the woman's yard and so on is modified by language that is set up precisely in order to *differentiate* the sexes – and he frequently holds the contentions of Hippocrates, Aristotle and Galen up to question before rejecting their conclusions as implausible. In reply to Aristotle's assertion that woman "is nothing more than an error or aberration of nature" (Crooke 271), Crooke also states (in a clear echo of Guibelet):

nature as well intendeth the generation of a female as of a male: and therefore it is unworthily said that she is an Error or Monster in nature [...] the woman hath a wombe ordained by nature as a field or seed plot to receyve, conceive and cherish the seed [...] (Crooke, 250)

In 1634, Alexander Read published an anatomy in which the notion of discrete female sex-identity was pushed still further. In Read's *Manuall of Anatomy*, female testicles (the last part of female anatomy to retain exact corollary status) are said to differ from male testicles in no fewer than *five* distinct ways, added to which there are further clear descriptions of the *cervix*, *hymen*, *cunnus* or *vulva*, *labia* and *clitoris* or *tentigo*. In Read (as in most manuals leading up to the publication of Culpeper's *Directory for Midwives* in 1651) we can see the way in which the voice of early modern medical science had evolved to a degree in which it was able to find its *own* authority and now spoke frankly about its manifold disagreements with its classical forbears. In Culpeper we will therefore eventually read that:

The necke of the womb is nothing else but the distance between the privvy passage and the mouth of the womb, into which the man's yard goes in the act of copulation, and in a woman of reasonable stature is eight inches in length [...] (Culpeper, 25)

and, in response to anyone who might quote Galen or postulate about an inverted phallus, the sharp reminder:

Galen never saw a man or woman dissected in his life, it being accounted abominable in his time to use such supposed cruelty upon a dead corpse, and therefore he dissected only Apes, which was the cause he wrote such an Apish Anatomy [...] (Culpeper, 28)

Nicholas Culpeper, who knew in detail the theories of the ancients (he had translated and published *Galen's Art of Physic* some thirty-two years previously), exemplifies the apogee of early modern anatomy, and the distance it had put between itself and the 'one-sex' anatomical

model. His *Directory for Midwives* therefore sums up, in clear and categorical terms, the 'two-sex' model of human reproductive anatomy that had been developing through the work of anatomists and physicians such as Vesalius, Columbus, Fallopio, Vicary, Grévin, Udall, Lemnius, de Cauliaco, Barrough, Guibelet, Crooke and Riolan since the mid-sixteenth century.

Culpeper culminates a sustained critique of classical anatomy with a comment (on Galen's theory of the divided womb) that would have been unthinkable prior to the rise in experimental anatomy of the mid-sixteenth century. He observes 'this is just as true as the moon is made with green cheese.' (*Culpeper*, 28). It is a cheeky repudiation, but one whose roots may be found in the treatises of the preceding hundred years.

V

As now I bring this chapter to a close, I will turn to some of the sociological implications of the emergence of a 'two-sex' anatomical model. In the late spring of 1601, a remarkable case was brought to trial in Normandy, north-western France, that has a direct bearing on the ways in which contemporaneous developments in experimental anatomy had influenced both medical and legal conceptions of femininity by the turn of the seventeenth century. Proceedings commenced in the small rural commune of Montivilliers, but (since the case quickly evolved into one of the most complicated instances of cross-dressing to be encountered by the French judiciary) they swiftly passed on to the appeal court in the administrative capital of Rouen. The testimony of this trial includes medical evidence that was gleaned from the series of anatomical inspections that were ordered by the various courts that dealt with the case; it therefore documents the diverse attempts that were made to pin down the precise biological sex (and hence legal position) of a bi-gendered defendant who had been accused of appropriating male attire (and of using the guise of masculinity that such apparel offered to commit the crime of lesbian sodomy). The records of the trial still survive (as does a published debate arising from it that took place between a prominent pair of French physicians). In my opinion, the details of this case indicate quite categorically (i) that a fixed notion of female sex-identity had become culturally inscribed by the turn of the seventeenth century and (ii) that a category of homosexual subjectivity not only existed, but was circumscribed by French law.

From the legal evidence of this trial, medical precedents were extrapolated that swiftly found their way into a series of three volumes that were published in Paris and Rouen (by the Professor of Pharmacology and Surgery at the Sorbonne, Jean Riolan, and the Norman Doctor who examined the defendant in this case, Jacques Duval).³¹ These tracts not only deliberate the degree of plausibility that should be attributed to occurrences of hermaphroditism in the

period, but one of them also sets out to deal with the [im]possibility of spontaneous sex-change itself.

As I now intend to demonstrate, then, evidence from these printed sources very much contradicts the notion that a 'one-sex' intellectual topography (allowing for hermaphroditism and sexual fluidity) existed by the close of the sixteenth century, because the evidence of this trial (and the treatises that arose as a result of it) repeatedly insist that a non-homologous (and therefore bifurcate) reproductive anatomical model had clearly emerged as a clinical paradigm that carried the full weight of law by 1601. The legal case, too, provides tangible insights into the ways in which anatomical science (based upon some kind of essentialist and biological – rather than gendered and behavioural – difference) lay behind the legal condemnation of a sexual *act* such as lesbian sodomy (a crime for which the evidence indicates culpability in this instance to have been decided using a two-sex model) and a sexual *persuasion* such as homosexuality (a sexual preference or 'type' whose presence is testified to by the existence, in this trial, of a precise legal category: that of the 'tribade' or 'fricatrice').

The day following epiphany in 1601 a young man named Marin Le Marcis (who had recently abjured himself of his Protestant faith before the Master Penetentier of Rouen so as to convert to Catholicism and contract himself in marriage with a local widow, Jeanne Le Fevre) was arrested in the village of Montivilliers. The charge levied against him was that he was – in fact – a woman, and (following what had become a familiar pattern) the 'man' was denounced by an informant from her own parish (of Angerville d'Orcher) as being Marie (and not Marin) Le Marcis.³² Marie Le Marcis thus stood accused of abandoning 'her' female name (and the gender identity under which she had lived out the first twenty years of her life), of illegally assuming male attire, and of contracting herself in marriage so that she might commit crimes of 'Sodomy and abominable lust' (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 397) with another woman. Given the gravity of the charges, both Le Marcis and Le Fevre were expediently tried by their local court and, during their hearing, Le Fevre testified to having had sexual intercourse with Le Marcis four times, during which activity she claimed to have noticed no anatomical difference between her new lover and her late husband (Jean Apuril) with whom she had had a sexual relationship that had produced three children. Clearly, then, if Le Fevre was telling the truth, the sexual *anatomy* of Le Marcis must have overtly resembled that of a male. In terms of the gender of Le Marcis, too, Le Fevre asserted that this 'Marin' did 'his' chores and looked after the Le Fevre household as well as her previous husband had done during his lifetime, and to her complete satisfaction.

Following the couple's initial testimony, the court ordered a rigorous clinical examination of Le Marcis to be undertaken by a doctor, two surgeons and an apothecary; during which examination it was ascertained that Le Marcis' biological sex was (fittingly to the accusations of homosexuality that were levelled against her) that of a woman. She was therefore condemned to death. The pair lodged an objection, however, and mounted a defence in which Le Marcis claimed to have felt herself to be a man since the age of fourteen (or thereabouts) and that she

possessed a virile member which protruded from her vulvic orifice whenever she was 'in a gay mood' (*Riolan*, 30) or when she took it out by half a finger's length in order to urinate. Notwithstanding 'her' testimony (and that of Le Fevre, who consistently claimed her lover to be a 'true' man), the court at Montivilliers did not feel it necessary to deliberate for long and delivered a final verdict on the fourth of May. In it, Le Marcis was ordered to 'make honourable rectification, [head] uncovered and bare footed' (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 397), first in the court itself and then before the church of Montivilliers. She was then condemned to be 'hanged and strangled on the gallows [and to have] her body burned to ashes' (*Riolan*, 30 - 31). 'Her goods and inheritances [were to be] acquired and confiscated by the King' (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 397). Le Fevre escaped with little less; sparing only her life, the court condemned this unfortunate widow to make penance in the same manner as Le Marcis and decreed that she should witness her lesbian lover's execution before being 'flayed and beaten with birch rods' (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 397) throughout the streets of Montivilliers and 'banished to three days walk of that province of Normandy' (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 397), her property and possessions likewise seized by the crown.

In the light of the anatomical evidence thus far presented in this chapter, the implications of the initial Montivilliers verdict seem clear. Despite claiming to have a virile member that descended from within her body and that appeared from her vagina (in the classic manner outlined in the FTM sex-change descriptions of standard mid-sixteenth century folklore and popular literature) *no* evidence was presented in the Le Marcis and Le Fevre trial that came anywhere near considering Marie Le Marcis as the subject of a perfective FTM transformation (that had correctly led her to assume the virile sex – and gender – of manhood). Unlike the ecclesiastical authorities that had dealt with her namesake, Marie Germain (in Vitry-le-François almost half a century previously), the court at Montivilliers appears to find no room for a transformatory interpretation in its rather literal account of events.³³ Unlike Germain (whose perfective vicissitude even assured her a promotion from pig-herd to royal courtier) the Montivilliers judgement found Le Marcis to be a woman – and a woman guilty of the crime of lesbian sodomy. It therefore considered her to be an active 'tribade' or 'fricatrice' and ruled that she merited the death penalty that existed in French law for the punishment of such cases. Le Fevre, despite (quite cleverly perhaps) saving her own life by maintaining ignorance of her partner's 'true' sexual identity, was nevertheless found guilty of submitting to Le Marcis' advances (and therefore of being sodomised, for the Montivilliers verdict was at pains to stress that since she had 'lent her consent and participation to the said crimes' (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 397) and the court therefore decided that she too should be quite calculatingly punished: seen to watch her partner executed in a public hanging and burning, before being physically assaulted by her community and, finally, reduced to public penury in a symbolic re-inscription of divine masculine authority that was to be performed by the embodiment of God (and her patriarchal state) in the person of Henry IV of Bourbon.

What is fascinating to me about the Le Marcis case, however, is that it did *not* end with these tragic punishments (as instances of female-to-male transvestism as a cover for covert

lesbianism not infrequently did). Unlike Marie the weaver in Montier-en-Der, then, Le Marcis did not accept her punishment 'like a man', nor did she perform her expected role in an affirmation of male superiority that was set up to play right back into the hands of the patriarchal oligarchy that condemned her sexual transgression. Had Le Marcis been hanged and burned (and Le Fevre birched and banished) the case would simply form one of many precedents documenting the legal history that undermines the 'myth of lesbian impunity' in early modern Europe.³⁴ But, crucially, that is *not* what happened in this case; and what is vital to my current enquiry is that, supported by a graphic knowledge of Le Marcis' extraordinary reproductive physiology, neither Le Marcis nor Le Fevre accepted their sentences but rather chose to take their case before the Conciergerie at Rouen, where their appeal was duly heard, and the case received a new verdict on the seventh of June 1601. It is this second verdict (and the evidence of the appeal trial itself) that is in every way more intriguing than the Montivilliers trial and its initial ruling; since it was the appeal trial that instigated the wider cultural production of a surrounding body of literature that dealt (initially) with Le Marcis sex-identity but (almost immediately) transformed into a condemnation of the erroneous belief in hermaphroditism, and eventually into what perhaps constitutes the most insistent emphasis on a two-sex model of reproductive anatomy that is to be found in the popular medical literature of the northern European Renaissance.

The appeal court in Rouen judged that Le Marcis' reproductive anatomy was central to the judgement of her case and it quickly ordered that a much more thorough physical examination than that which had been performed in Montivilliers be undertaken. In Rouen it was therefore 'the oldest doctors, surgeons and midwives of the town' (*Riolan*, 31) who examined Le Marcis. Their initial report agreed with the findings of the medical team in Montivilliers. During a second examination, however (in which one doctor infamously put his fingers into the neck of the defendant's uterus and caused Marie to 'ejaculate'), it was asserted that the 'penis' that Le Marcis claimed to have located inside her had been found.³⁵ In the most thorough physical examination undertaken thus far, a local doctor from Rouen, Jacques Duval, insisted that he had felt a nervous and ligamentous body with a well formed and pierced glans: 'such as we notice when looking at the head or glans of the penis' (*Riolan*, 34). He moreover claimed that the protuberance had been so stimulated by the rubbing instanced by his inspection that it had 'shed its semen (which was white, thick and moderately fluid)' (*Riolan*, 35) all over him. Furnished with what he took to be incontrovertible evidence of 'something virile' in Le Marcis, Duval thus managed to convince another of the doctors present at the examination to testify with him that the protuberance constituted 'something in [Le Marcis] which made and rendered her different to women' (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 441); by means of both physicians' testimony, Le Marcis' life was saved because, on hearing Duval's evidence (and further medical corroboration of what constituted a somewhat literal 'climax' to the case) the appeal court had little choice but to acknowledge that there was 'contention between the doctors and [...] uncertainty over the sex of Marie le Marcis' (*Riolan*, 35). It therefore overruled the Montivilliers verdict and freed both prisoners (but nevertheless enjoined Le Marcis to reassume female attire until the age of twenty-five and prohibited her from living with a person of either sex on pain of death).

My own reading of this case, for what its worth (and readers can make up their own minds after reading the fascinating debate surrounding the trial that I translate and reproduce as appendix one to this dissertation), is that Le Marcis was a lesbian; and that a humanitarian Duval was actively looking for *any* excuse that he could find to acquit her and spare her life. Whatever the truth about Le Marcis' sexuality and abnormal physiology (or indeed these doctors' intentions), that we cannot ever know, however, that such a physiological turn of events should *not* be read as a descending uterus and the sexual 'perfection' of this female subject sex *is* remarkable *if* the ubiquitous acceptance of a homologous (and fluid) continuum of male and female sex-identity is accepted as having endured right up to the enlightenment.

What is precisely *lacking* in the case of Marie Le Marcis is any underlying notion of (or overt reference to) homology between male and female reproductive organs. Indeed, as I will now demonstrate, the interpretation that is given to the anatomical evidence of the trial constitutes some of the most persuasive evidence that the 'one-sex' anatomical model had entirely broken down as the dominant intellectual paradigm well before 1600.

In a treatise which sprang directly from the trial, Jean Riolan used Le Marcis' anatomy as a fixed point of reference from which he systematically undermined any residual conception of androgyny and sexual-transformation that might be re-kindled in the popular mythology surrounding her case. Digging at the very foundations of hermaphroditism (and starting with the Aristophanic account of mankind's androgynous origins in Plato's *Symposium*) the Parisian professor of surgery proceeded – quite overtly – to use the range hermaphrodites that are mentioned in Aristotle, Galen, Pliny and Boece, to 'weed out and un-root' (Riolan, 52) any misconceptions of androgyny and sex-transformation that might possibly still exist in the early modern period.

Riolan's text employs an unflaggingly uniform methodology. As we have seen in Crook's *Microcosmographia*, the 'philosopher's blood-hounds' of dissection and reason are paramount to this physician as he re-interprets and explains each of the classical sources on sex-change and hermaphroditism with which he deals. Using a bifurcate, 'two-sex', clinical paradigm as the dominant consensus of reproductive anatomy, Riolan ascribes one of two fixed sexes to each hermaphroditic subject in question, and a clear notion of essential sexual difference between women and men systematically leads him to observe:

il est impossible qu'un Hermaphrodit ait les deux sexes parfaits, pour engendrer dans soy & ailleurs, [...] Le sexe de l'homme est different de celui de la femme en l'espece, laquelle consiste en la diuersité de la cõformation des parties genitales, & du temperament. Car il est tres certain que la structure des parties genitales est tout autre en l'homme qu'en la femme; le temperament est aussi dissemblable [...] partant vn seul ne peut auoir les deux parties genitales de l'hõme & de la femme, & les deux temperaments ensemble, pour faire action de tous les deux [...] (Riolan, 67)

(it is impossible for a hermaphrodite to have both sexes perfect and capable of engendering in itself and elsewhere [...] The sex of the man is different to that of the

woman of the species. The which difference consists in the diversity of both genital conformation and constitution. For it is very certain that genital structure is completely different in men than in women. The constitution is also quite dissimilar [...] Consequently a single being cannot have the genitals of both man and woman together with the constitutions to make them both work [...])

It is this sense of essential biological *difference* that consistently augments and underscores the logic of Riolan's denial of 'true hermaphrodites'.³⁶ He therefore repeatedly insists that the penis is a body made up of muscles, whereas the uterus is a hollow cavity, that the female testicles are *outside* the womb and that it can therefore not be a homologue of the male scrotum (that *contains* the male testicles) and asserts that it is the *external* clitoris that is the corollary of the glans of the male penis (that it performs like function and possesses a similar set of erective muscles that are also external to the female body). In analysing each classical, medieval or early modern instance of sex-change or hermaphroditism, Riolan's methodology rests firmly on a baseline of sexual demarcation and essential *difference*. He therefore puzzles rhetorically over the case of one hermaphrodite that was reported by the anatomist Realdo Columbus:

Comment peut avoir vn Hermaphrodit le penil bien formé pour l'eiacuation de la semence, & le col de la matrice de bonne sorte pour receuoir? Car on sçait qu'il y a deux muscles pour la verge, couchez sur l'vretre, qui prennent origine du sphincter de l'anus, qui ne peuuent estre en vn Hermaphrodit. Les deux ligaments cauerneux du penil viennent de la tuberosité exterieure de l'os Ischion, couuerts chacun d'un muscle pour l'erection. Du mesme lieu naissent les deux ligamens du clitoris de la femme, avec pareils muscles. L'vretre en cet Her-maphrodit ne remontera du perinee aux os pubis, mais passera sous la fente de la commissure des os pubis. Si cela est ainsi, où sera le lieu du clitoris, qui doit estre attachéà [sic] l'endroit où est colloquee la verge viril de l'Hermaphrodit, lequel s'il a vn membre viril, quelle incommodité apportera-il au congrés avec vn autre homme: s'il est vray qu'il puisse engendrer dans soy & ailleurs, quelle confusion sera-ce aux parties genitales interieures, qui seruent pour l'elaboration de la semence: laquelle ne sera point parfaicte, les vaisseaux n'ayans point leurs dimensions & estendues naturelles, ny les testicules, leur situation naturelle [?] (Riolan, 69 – 70)

(How can a hermaphrodite have a penis well formed to ejaculate semen *and* the neck of the womb of the right sort to receive it? For we know that there are two muscles lying by the urethra in the penis that originate from the sphincter of the anus—which could not be in a hermaphrodite. The two spongy ligaments of the penis come from the exterior protuberance of the ischium bone, each one covered by an erective muscle. From the same place come the two ligaments of the clitoris in women—with the same muscles. The urethra in this hermaphrodite did not go back up from the perineum to the pubic bones. If such is the case, where might the clitoris be located—which should be attached in the place in which this hermaphrodite's virile member is located? who, if he has a virile member, what awkwardness will he bring to congress with another man? If it is true that he can engender in himself and elsewhere, what confusion will there be in the interior genitalia which serve for the elaboration of the semen and which won't be at all perfect, the vessels not having the natural scale and dimensions at all, nor their testicles their natural place [?])

and proceeds to conclude:

Partant ie maintiens qu'il est impossible qu'un Hermaphrodit puisse auoir les deux parties genitales par-faictes & accomplies, pour exercer les deux actions, d'homme & de femme, encores moins de conceuoir dans son ventre, & engendrer ailleurs. (Riolan, 70 – 71)

(Which is why I therefore maintain that it is impossible for a hermaphrodite to have both sets of genitalia perfect and accomplished and capable of exercising the actions of both man and woman—and even less so that one could conceive in its stomach and engender elsewhere).

In a sustained explanation that covers some seven pages at the start of his treatise, Riolan condemns the ignorance of female anatomy that had been inherited by mid-sixteenth century anatomists. Exposing the basic errors of interpretation that had led Realdo Columbo to report that he had dissected three hermaphrodites, Riolan postulates:

Il se peut faire que Columbus, qui n'auoit pas recogneu la structure du *clitoris* aux autres femmes pour sa petitesse, bien qu'il l'aye nommé *dulcedinem amoris*, ayant recontré vne femme qui l'auoit gros & allongé, a creu ceste partie estre vn membre viril. Il ne faut point faire estat des vaisseaux deferens, qu'il dict auoir veu: car ny luy ny tous les autres Anatomistes n'ont pas cogneu & descouuert la structure admirable du Clitoris, & des vaisseaux spermatiques. Partant ceste femme dicte Androgyne estoit vraye femme, ce sexe predominant en elle, & ne se pouuoit servir de son penil, sinon pour chatouiller vne autre femme [...] (Riolan, 26 – 27)

(It could be that Columbus, who hadn't recognised the structure of the clitoris in other women because of its smallness (even though he named it *dulcedium amoris* having come across a woman who had one large and stretched out), believed this member to be a penis. One should not therefore instance these *vasa deferentia* that he claims to have seen at all, as neither he nor the other anatomists of his day had discovered or knew of the admirable structure of the clitoris and the spermatatic vessels. Consequently, this woman, who is said to have been an androgen, was in fact a true woman. That sex was predominant in her and she couldn't make use of her 'penis' other than to tickle another woman [...])

In every case, then, Riolan's insistence that hermaphrodites cannot exist revolves around a denial of the 'one-sex' model and the central premise that it is the *clitoris* (and not the uterus) that is the female equivalent of the male penis. It is thus difficult to over-emphasise the weight that should be drawn from his observation that: 'neither [Columbus] nor the other anatomists of his day had discovered or knew of the admirable structure of the clitoris' because it is a comment that effectively dismisses the understanding of female reproductive anatomy that had been inherited by the mid-sixteenth century anatomist and implies that such a paradigm has been entirely replaced with a *new* reproductive model.

The insistence on the central significance of the clitoris is in no way idiosyncratic to Riolan, however, and it should not be overlooked that (once he had determined that Columbo's hermaphrodite was a woman) Riolan identified the clitoris as the locus of lesbian sexual activity. The doctors in the Le Marcis trial also documented the fact that the presence (or absence) of a clitoris was fundamental to the appeal court's decision to acquit Le Marcis; because, far from assuming homology (and interpreting the descending protuberance as a uterus moving towards phallic perfection and therefore implicitly ascribing to it the status of organ most likely to have been the instrument of sexual contact with Le Fevre, as the accused had themselves claimed) the doctors, midwives and surgeons who examined Marie presumed instead that she must have exploited her *clitoris* during sexual intercourse if she was a lesbian.³⁷ The central justification for Le Marcis' acquittal (in Duval's account) is, therefore, *not* that she had become a man, or was a male hermaphrodite (who could not legally be considered as a lesbian) but rather that:

voyans le clitoris fort petit, & non plus gros ou long que la moitié d'un pois, ils le reietroient fort loing d'accusation & blâme, comme partie inutile & trop petite pour en

abuser au fait supposé, & n'accusoient ledict Marcis d'estre du nombre des tribades ou frictrices, mais disoyent qu'ils n'adioustoient foy aux depositions dedicts le Marcis & le Febure [...] (Duval, *Hermaphrodits* 441)

(observing [her] rather small clitoris, no larger or longer than a split pea, [the medical examiners] distanced it very strongly from accusation and blame, as a useless organ and too small to be abused in the supposed manner [and therefore] did not charge the said Marcis of being one of the number of tribades or frictrices, but said that they didn't believe the depositions of the said Le Marcis and Le Fevre [...])

Quite extraordinarily, then, the incontrovertible testimony of *both* women that they *had* had sexual intercourse on at least four occasions was ignored or disbelieved (and this not in the light of a physical inspection of the phallic protuberance that had actually 'ejaculated' over one doctor's hand, but of Marie Le Marcis' *clitoris*). As Riolan pointed out (in the anatomical explanation of an androgynous woman and an Ethiopian hermaphrodite who had both been dissected by Columbo), an abnormally large clitoris was thought to lead on to lesbianism and was often misinterpreted as the penis of a female 'hermaphrodite' (Riolan, 23 - 27).

Yet all of this evidence pales into insignificance when set against Chapter VIII of Riolan's *Discours sur les Hermaphrodits* (that discusses 'Whether a Girl Can Become a Boy and a Boy return to the State and Sex of a Girl') in which the Galenic system of reproductive homology is clearly rejected, essential difference directly outlined, and the fact that even *surgical intervention* cannot bring about sexual metamorphoses categorically asserted. Riolan states:

Les parties genitales des hommes & des femmes sont tellement separees en figure, conformation & nombre, qu'il est impossible qu'elles se puissent changer & conuertir les vnes aux autres. Je sçay que Galien a creu les femmes auoir les mesmes parties genitales que les hommes, qu'ils differoient seulement en situation, laquelle estoit aux hommes exterieure, aux femmes interieure. Mais vn bon Anatomiste iugera facilement, qu'en quelque façon & maniere on puisse tourner & figurer, mesme avec les mains, la matrice & ses dependances, iamais ne ressemblera à la structure & cõposition du membre viril [...] (Riolan, 102 - 103)

(The genitals of men and women are so distinct in form, structure and number that it is impossible for them to change and convert into each other. I know that Galen believed women to have the same genitals as men and that they differed only in location—which was external in men and internal in women. But a good anatomist will easily judge that regardless of the way the womb and its appendages might be turned and shaped, even by hand, they will never resemble the structure and composition of the virile member [...])

and in a section that seems to be aimed directly at undermining the popular anecdote of Marie Germain (as it had been told in Paré and Montaigne), Riolan adds:

la verge ne peut estre cachée au dedans, ny estre formee dans l'enclos du peritoine; d'autant qu'elle est bastie de deux gros ligaments & de l'vretre qui sont exterieurs. Les ligaments prennent origine exterieurement de la tuberosité de l'os Ischion, & remontans en haut s'vnissent pour s'attacher au milieu de la commissure des os pubis, où est l'appuy & fermeté du penil. Les testicules & vaisseaux spermatics peuuent bien demurer cachez au dedans, mais non pas la verge, qui est la partie qui separe l'homme d'auec la femme [...] (Riolan, 105)

(the penis cannot be hidden inside, nor can it exist formed in the enclosure of the peritoneum—which is all the more true because it is made up from two stout ligaments and the urethra that are external. The ligaments originate outside the protuberance of the ischium bone, go back up and then come back together before attaching to the middle of the line of junction in the pubic bone—where the support and firmness of the penis is

located. The testicles and spermatic vessels can well reside hidden inside, but not the penis which is the member which differentiates man from woman [...])

Realising the authority of those whom he is contradicting, Riolan provides an anatomically correct interpretation of the phenomenon that had been encountered by Montaigne and Paré, and argues:

Pour ne condamner & accuser de fausseté tous les exemples qu'on apporte des filles qui sont deuenus garçons. Je croy que le scrotum vuide des testicules, replié par le milieu, representoit les leures de l'orifice extérieur de la matrice, & que dedans ceste fente estoit cachee vne petite verge, laquelle petit à petit s'est accreüe, qu'avec le temps les testicules qui estoient logees dans le ventre [sic] proche des aines, sont descendus dans les bourses. Mais ie ne pense pas que ceste verge soit aussi fort, puissante, & grande, que celle des autres hommes bien formez & robustes [...] (Riolan, 106)

(So as not to condemn and accuse of falsehood all the examples which are brought forward of girls who have become boys, I believe that the scrotum, emptied of its testicles and folded back up into its middle, resembles the lips of the womb's exterior orifice; and that inside this crevice a little penis was hidden which got bigger little by little as the testicles which had been lodged close to the groin in the abdomen came down in time into the scrotum. But I don't think that this penis may be as strong, powerful and big as that of other well built and robust men [...])

but he finally returns to a clear insistence on absolute, incontrovertible and fixed sexual difference with the assertion:

Il est du tout incroyable & impossible qu'un homme puisse deuenir femme, car quelle similitude a le scrotum avec la matrice. La verge qui est solide à cause des trois corps dont elle est composee, peut elle deuenir creuse, pour représenter le col de la matrice. Comment peut-elle se rebrousser & renuerser, il seroit plus aisé à la nature de rebastir un autre corps, que changer & conuertir les parties genitales de l'homme en celles de la femme. Les histoires qu'on rapporte de ceux qui sont retournez en l'estat & nature des filles, sont contes fabuleux faicts à plaisir [...] (Riolan, 104 – 105)

(It is absolutely unbelievable and impossible for a man to become a woman. For what resemblance does the scrotum bear to the womb? Can the penis—which is solid due to the three bodies from which it is made up—become hollow in order to represent the neck of the womb? how can it turn back upon and invert itself? It would be easier for nature to rebuild another body than to change and convert the genitals of a man into those of a woman. The stories that are told of those who are turned inside out into the state and sex of girls are fabulous tales wildly made up [...])

In the same way that Crook had rejected Hippocrates' story of Phæthusa, Riolan finally concludes his treatise with a reassessment of the ancients in which their own tacit assertions of essential difference are foregrounded. Combining an anecdote of Saint Augustine with an epigram from Seneca, Riolan finally concludes the matter of FTM sexual transformation (and his treatise) with the following observation:

Saint Augustin raconte qu'en Hippone, un ieune garçon en l'aage [sic] de puberté, sentit vne extreme douleur aux parties genitales, les Medecins ne pouuans recognoistre la cause, on apperceut que c'estoit sa verge qui estoit rentree au dedans, de sorte qu'ayans couppé la peau du prepuce qui pendoit, pour descouurir la verge, on ne la peut iamais tirer & faire sortir. Mais saint Augustin ne dit pas que pour cela, le garçon soit deuenue fille. Partant ie conclus avec Seneque. *Omne animal donec moriatur, hoc est idem quod coepit, homo donec moriatur homo est, equus, equus: transire in aliud non possunt [...]* (Riolan, 108)

(Saint Augustine tells us that in Hippo Regius a young boy felt an extreme pain in his genitals at the age of puberty, [or which] the doctors couldn't work out the cause. It was

thought to be his penis which had gone back inside because, having cut the skin of the foreskin which hung down in order to expose the penis, it could not be pulled and made to come out at all. But Saint Augustine doesn't say for all that that the boy became a girl. I therefore conclude with Seneca: *Every animal, when it dies, is the same as it was when it began. Man, when he dies is man, horse, horse: they cannot become something else [...]*)

It is the observation with which I also conclude this chapter.

Notes to Chapter I:

¹ William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix* (London, 1633), p. 333.

² Jacques Ferrand, *De la Maladie de L'Amour* (Paris, 1623). This quotation is taken from the translation by Edmund Chilmead, published under the title *Erotomania* (Oxford, 1640), p. 12.

³ Helkiah Crooke, *A Description of the Body of Man* (London, 1615), p. 250.

⁴ The challenges to classical authority that were undertaken by early modern scientists have been well documented. In one commentary upon Baldasar Heseler's account of the procession that led up to the first of a series of anatomical demonstrations that were performed by Andreus Vesalius in the Church of San Francesco in Bologna (in January 1540) Jonathan Sawday has, for example, pointed out the immense scientific and cultural weight that was attributed to Galenic anatomy, but also the fact that:

what Heseler and his fellow students were witnessing was in the nature of a gladiatorial combat. The opponents, Vesalius and the Galenic anatomist Curtius, were to produce a series of demonstrations on the human body which were not simply to record the facts of anatomical demonstration, but to test the competing claims of two methodologies.

Jonathan Sawday, "The fate of Marsyas: Dissecting the Renaissance Body", in *Renaissance Bodies*, edited by Lucy Ghent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), p. 114.

⁵ François Rabelais, *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, translated by Donald M. Frame (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 4.

⁶ The instances in question are as follows: *All's Well That Ends Well* (III.iii.); *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (III.i. and III.i.); *2 Henry IV* (II.ii.) and *Coriolanus* (II.i.).

The notion of *comedy* might well be of importance here of course (especially given the ridiculous and grotesque conceptions of anatomy that are to be found in Rabelais' *Gargantua*. Moreover, with the exception of *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare's 'Galens' likewise only appear within the generic context of comedy). It could be the case, then, that *both* Shakespeare and Rabelais are in actual fact undertaking a subtle *critique* of Galenic anatomy (by means of a parody of its anatomical certainties in relation to the grotesque visions of the body that both writers offer their readers).

The several instances of Galenic comparison that appear in the Falstaff plays will be fully discussed below, in chapter II.

⁷ Thomas Laqueur claims that the mid-seventeenth century English anatomist William Harvey was, for instance, 'still deeply embedded in the political aesthetics of the 'one-sex' model' as he wrote *exercitationes de generatione animalium* in 1651. See Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body & Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 142.

⁸ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, p 28.

⁹ One of the most complete lists of supposed instances of FTM sex-change to have been published in the Renaissance is to be found in Volume II of Johann Schenck Von Grafenburg, *Observationes Medicarum Rarurum* (Frankfurt, 1600). The full list is reproduced as Appendix II to this dissertation.

For details of critics who have discussed some of these cases, see my Introduction (especially footnotes 9 – 11). Two additional articles that centre on the Marie Germain case have also been recently published. See Patricia Parker, 'Gender Ideology, Gender Change: The Case of Marie Germain', *Critical Inquiry* 19 (Winter 1993), and L. Daston & K. Park, 'Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France', *Critical Matrix* 1 (1985), especially pp. 1 – 19.

¹⁰ This title-page quotation (and all further citations) are from the 1587 edition entitled *The Englishe-Mans Treasure: With the true anatomie of Mans bodie [...]* (London, 1587). Hereafter *Vicary* in the main body of the text.

Both Vicary's work and the man himself were quite a phenomenon in sixteenth-century England. *The Anatomy of the Body of Man* went through several editions (including a memorial copy that was published by the surgeons of St. Bartholomew's hospital in 1577). The memorial edition contains detailed biographical notes on Vicary's life.

¹¹ See Andreus Vesalius *de humani corporis fabrica* (Basel, 1543) p. 532. The instance is also cited in Charles D. O'Malley *Andreus Vesalius of Brussels 1514 - 1564* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965) p. 142.

¹² This page numbering is presumably erroneous. As it follows pages 46 & 47 (and precedes 49) one would presume it to be page 48.

¹³ As will be seen below, the 'male' nature of Marie Le Marcis' semen was enough to acquit her in a case of lesbian sodomy held before the Parliament of Rouen in 1611. The Case is fully discussed in section V of this chapter.

¹⁴ My translation of which is 'Perception does not falter in the face of its own object'.

Jacques Duval cites this Latin maxim in an explanation of hermaphrodites, in which he discusses the ways in which detailed human dissection provides insights that are unattainable by any other means:

[the author] notices two sorts of writers who have outlined and told stories of hermaphrodites. The first, chroniclers who were content with simple storytelling without bringing any other significance to their stories other than simply exposing them; the others, doctors or surgeons who writing what is history have, by the same token, been able to judge and make out whether what they saw, touched and dissected was a hermaphrodite or not. As for the first, it may well be that they could be deceived and deluded – the others, no: *quoniam sensus non fallitur circa proprium objectum*. What is more, if it had only been the oldest philosophers and doctors who had made reference to all of this to us, one might reckon that their gullibility could have been surprised, having ignored the structure of the clitoris. But there are some moderns who have accurately recognised this member – such as (amongst others): Bauhin, Vesalius, Colombus and Paré – who haven't shied away from identifying, dealing with and representing stories of Hermaphrodites to us; and, not content with a straightforward account of that which they would have noticed through an external examination, they have performed dissections on these extraordinary bodies (which are estranged from the commonplace make up of the human race) in order to rigorously observe what is acting internally which could accustom these creatures to the uncommon offices, sometimes of one sex, sometimes of the other.

Jacques Duval, *Response au discours fait par le sieur Riolan, Docteur en medecine et Professeur en Chirurgie et Pharmacie, contre l'histoire de L'Hermaphrodite de Rouen* (Rouen: Julien Courant, c. 1615), pp. 52 - 3. The translation of the original French is my own. The French text is available in Appendix I to this dissertation (see also footnote 31 below).

¹⁵ Andreus Vesalius, *Les Portraits Anatomiques de Toutes les Parties Du Corps Humain* translated by J. Grévin (Paris, 1569), Chapter XII 'De la procreation de l'homme', p. 27. Hereafter Grévin in the main body of the text.

¹⁶ My translation of the above quotation. All subsequent translations from French and Latin source material in this dissertation are my own unless explicitly stated.

¹⁷ Nicholas Udall, *A Treatise of Anatomy* (London, 1553), sig. Aiii^r (my italics). Hereafter Udall in the main body of the text.

¹⁸ Lemnius, *Des Occultes Merveilles et Secrets de Nature*, translated by Jacques Gohory (Paris 1567), p.17. Hereafter Lemnius in the main body of the text.

I quote from this French edition of Lemnius since, although he was widely published in England in Latin from 1557, I was not able to locate an extant Latin edition. The first English translation did not appear until *The Secret Miracles of Nature* (London: Jo. Streater, 1658).

¹⁹ Ambroise Paré, *Œuvres* (Paris, 1575), p. 82. Hereafter Paré in the main body of the text.

²⁰ See Michel de Montaigne, *Oeuvres Complètes*, edited by Albert Thibaudet and Maurice Rat (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), pp. 1118 - 19. Hereafter Montaigne in the main body of the text.

²¹ For a standard instance of startled critical responses to this case, see (most notably) Stephen Orgel, 'Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989), pp. 7 - 29.

²² Guido de Cauliaco, *Guydo's Questions* (London: Thomas East, 1579), sig. 33^r.

²³ Phillip Barrough, *The Method of Physicke* (London, 1583), p. 152. Hereafter *Barrough* in the main body of the text.

²⁴ Barrough is, of course, addressing an issue that would have been far more relevant during the Renaissance than it is now (in the privileged first world at least) since there is a definite causal connection between the prolapsed uterus that he describes and multiparity (or the bearing of many children).

²⁵ For the work that is generally cited to have established the earliest – and most concrete – biological notion of female sexual difference see Reinier De Graaf, *de mullerum organis generatione inservientibus tractatus novus* (Leiden, 1672).

²⁶ Gulbelet, Jourdain, *Trois Discours Philosophiques*, (Évreux, 1603). This quotation is taken from « Discours Second: Du Principe de la Génération de l'Homme », Chapitre III, p. 135.

²⁷ Helkiah Crooke, *Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man* (London: W. Jaggard, 1615), p. 200. Hereafter *Crooke* in the main body of the text.

²⁸ Nicholas Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives* (London, H. Sawbridge 1684), p. 22. Hereafter *Culpeper* in the main body of the text (this treatise was first published in 1651).

²⁹ In fact the idea that the corresponding organ to the penis is the clitoris was first posited in detail by Gabrielli Fallopio in his *Observationes Anatomicae* (Venice, 1561); it is a discovery that was subsequently given serious intellectual weight in Italian anatomies long before 1600.

³⁰ The quotation is from my translation of the following account of Columbus' mis-identification of a hermaphrodite:

Il se peut faire que Columbus, qui n'auoit pas recogneu la structure du *clitoris* aux autres femmes pour sa petitesse, bien qu'il l'aye nommé *dulcedinem amoris*, ayant recontré vne femme qui l'auoit gros et allongé, a creu c'est partie estre vn membre viril. Il ne faut point faire estat des vaisseaux deferens, qu'il dict auoir veu: car ny luy ny tors les autres Anatomistes n'ont pos cogneu et descouuert la structure admirable du clitoris, et des vaisseaux spermatiques.

Jean Riolan, *Discours sur les Hermaphrodits. Où il est Demonstré Contre l'opinion Commune, qu'il n'y a Point de Vrays Hermaphrodits* (Paris: Pierre Ramler, 1614), pp. 26 - 7. Hereafter *Riolan* in the main body of the text.

³¹ I have translated substantial sections of the three treatises that are relevant to this case (from the copies held in *La Réserve des livres rares* of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (site François Mitterrand) in Paris). Appendix I to this dissertation ('Selections Concerning the Hermaphrodite of Rouen') therefore provides a twin columned parallel English and French translated summary of:

Jacques Duval, *Des Hermaphrodits, Accouchemens des Femmes, et Traitement qui est Requis pour les Relever en Santé, et bien Élever leurs Enfants* [On Hermaphrodites, the Labour of Women and the Treatment that is Necessary to Bring them Back to Health, and to Bring Up their Children Correctly] (Rouen: David Geffroy, 1612). Hereafter *Duval, Hermaphrodits* in the main body of the text.

Jean Riolan [the younger], *Discours sur les Hermaphrodits. Où il est Demonstré Contre l'opinion Commune, qu'il n'y a Point de Vrays Hermaphrodits* [Treatise Concerning Hermaphrodites. In which it is demonstrated (against widespread belief) that there are no such things as true hermaphrodites] (Paris: Pierre Ramler, 1614). Hereafter *Riolan* in the main body of the text.

Jacques Duval, *Responce Av Discovrs Fait Par Le Sieur Riolan, Docteur en Medecine & Professeur En Chirurgerie & Pharmacie à Paris, Contre l'Histoire De l'Hermaphrodit de Rouen* [Reply To The Treatise Published By Master Riolan, Doctor Of Medecine and Professor Of Surgery and Pharmacology, Against the Story of the Hermaphrodite of Rouen] (Rouen: Julien Courant, c. 1615). Hereafter *Duval, Response* in the main body of the text.

³² A previous example of such a denunciation for lesbianism is provided by Montaigne, who cites the case in his travel journal of a 'well disposed young man' who was in fact a transvestite girl (Montaigne, *Œuvres*, p. 1118).

Mary the Weaver fiancéed a local girl from Vitry-le-François but later moved to Montier-en-Der, where she married a second woman and lived with her for four or five months before being accused of sodomy by a member of her own village who was visiting the new region. Mary was tried and eventually hanged in Montirandet for 'des inventions illicites à suplérer au defect de son sexe' – a penalty that – if we are to believe Montaigne – the transvestite lesbian accepted gladly rather than return to the ignominious life of a woman.

³³ I am presuming here that the case of Marie Germain took place some time in the early 1560s. Montaigne's reference is dated September 10th 1580; in his account, however, the event is set up as one that took place quite some time beforehand, and he is insistent that Germain was an adult by the time he came to Vitry-le-François and was informed of the events by 'the most eminent officials in the town' who had witnessed them (see Montaigne, *Œuvres*, pp. 1119).

Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres et Prodiges* (Paris, 1573), p. 19 also acknowledges some sense of history to the anecdote, as well as noting the fact that Germain subsequently became a courtier to Charles IX (who ruled from 1560 - 74). The 1573 edition of *Des Monstres et Prodiges* mentions only 'the king' but all editions after 1575 mention Charles by name in a marginal note.

³⁴ See Louis Crompton, 'The Myth of Lesbian Impunity: Capital Punishment from 1270 to 1791,' *Journal of Homosexuality*, 6: 1-2 (1980-81), pp. 11 - 25. A full account of Mary the Weaver and other early modern European lesbians who were executed as a result of their sexuality is given in this fascinating article.

³⁵ For perhaps the most famous discussion of this case see Stephen Greenblatt, 'Fiction and Friction', in *Reconstructing Individualism*, edited by Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna, and David E. Wellbery (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 30 - 52 (and especially pp. 30 - 47).

³⁶ Riolan emphatically denies the existence of 'true' or 'perfect' hermaphrodites (those who have complete and fully functional sets of both male and female reproductive organs). He does, however, concede that certain cases are born who develop exterior or internal characteristics that resemble the genitalia or reproductive organs of the other sex but that cannot perform the *functions* of the real organ in their biological opposite, since he considers them to be mere prostheses or deformities.

³⁷ The function of the clitoris in lesbian sexual acts was the focus of greatest anatomical concern, certainly in Renaissance France. As has recently been observed:

'virtually every writer on hermaphroditism [sic] includes a discussion of 'tribades' or 'fricatrices': women with or without an enlarged clitoris who corrupted or seduced other women. Such passages, furthermore, were subject to special censorship. The sixteenth-century French surgeon Ambroise Paré was forced to remove a detailed description of lesbian practice, and of the female genitals, from the chapter on hermaphrodites of his treatise *On Monsters and Prodiges*. The Parisian medical faculty feared that this discussion of sodomy, which they considered "unfit to be read, recited and heard by Christians," would corrupt women by putting ideas into their heads—a danger which they saw as particularly acute, since Paré's treatise was in the vernacular.'

Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, 'Hermaphrodites in Renaissance France', *Critical Matrix* vol. 1, no. 5 (1985).

For a detailed discussion of the state censorship of Paré, see Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres et Prodiges*, edited by Jean Céard, (Geneva, 1971), Introduction pp. xiv - xvi.

Chapter II:

Yde and Olive, Gallathea, and Falstaff: The Homo-erotics of Anatomical Ambiguity and Metamorphosis

I

So where does all of this 'hard science' leave us in terms of early modern theatre? Well, put plainly, if late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century play-texts that contain instances of spontaneous sex-change (or appear in some way to buy into the biological instabilities and corporal vicissitudes of a 'one-sex' anatomical model) cannot accurately be perceived as operating within a dominant cultural frame of reference that was capable of accommodating such notions of anatomical fluidity, then something else (and something a lot less *literal*) must have surely been going on. I therefore intend to argue in this chapter that, regardless of some rather conservative narrative conclusions (such as the entirely hypothetical sexual transformation that is promised to occur off-stage at the conclusion of Lyly's *Gallathea*; or the equally absent death of Falstaff – and Hal's rejection of the homo-social world of the Boar's Head Tavern – in Shakespeare's second tetralogy), what is *actually* taking place in such narratives is a *sustained* and *sympathetic* exploration of the same-sex relationships that audiences actually *do* see staged. My proposal for this chapter, then, is that plays that appear on the surface to offer biologically ambiguous characters (such as Falstaff) or sexual transformation as some sort of narrative get-out clause (such as *Gallathea*) can often be much more profitably read as investigations of gendered *behaviour* and *same-sex* relations (be they homo-social, homo-erotic or homo-sexual) than they can as simple enquiries into the relatively straightforward question of anatomical sex-identity.

In what follows, I therefore intend to argue that setting the mid-sixteenth century *decline* of the 'one-sex' anatomical model (together with longstanding notions of the implausibility of anti-theatrical allegations concerning the 'dissolving' player) against the transvestite spectacle of early-modern theatrical display (and the homo-social, or homosexual, narrative content with which this chapter deals), allows for some very rewarding speculation about the *homo-erotic* nature of much early-modern drama (perhaps, even, about the possibility of homosexual subjectivity amongst certain Renaissance audiences). Ruling out a fluid anatomical model that has enabled (what is often heterosexist) criticism to repeatedly 'normalise' erotic relations between same-sex partners (either by arguing that boy-actors were feared to 'degenerate' into women in performance, or that female characters 'transform' into men during the course of their

narratives), and instead acknowledging some sense of *concrete* and *immutable* corporal certainty, can liberate scholars (precisely because it *fixes* stage-bodies) and therefore allow for a re-reading of the homo-social, homo-erotic, homosexual and lesbian relationships that occur in dramatic narratives (together with the theatrical convention of cross-dressing itself) in the light of a much more overtly homo-erotic poetics. For me at least – in both my practical and my theoretical work – this approach has certainly constituted a much more satisfying point of departure than the (rather literal) invocations of fluid ‘one-sex’ anatomy to which the academy has recently been subject. I will therefore re-consider four late-sixteenth-century play-texts here: *Gallathea*, *I* and *II Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These dramas appear to involve (in fact seem to rely upon) spontaneous sex-change or corporal fluidity (and also give the impression of some sense of heterosexual ‘normalisation’ in their narrative closures) but, rather than buying into a ‘one-sex’ model, it is my intention in this chapter to question whether *any* late-Renaissance English audience unquestioningly accepted the possibility of *actual* bodily fluidity or sexual metamorphosis in such cases. What I mean to ask, instead, is whether theatrical spectators were not – in all probability – much more likely to have been invited to read their implied sex-changes (such as that in Lyly’s *Gallathea*) or apparent anatomical ambiguities (as in the case of Falstaff) as something *else* entirely.

In essence, then, this chapter is queer-theory (in that will attempt to re-assess – and reclaim – the conventional heterosexual conclusions of a range of ostensibly anatomically mutable narratives and characters). Plots that have developed along radically homo-erotic lines up until the closing moments of their performances (but that suddenly appear to terminate in rather conservative guarantees of (hetero)sexual metamorphosis) will therefore be re-read as consistently homo-erotic; and a large degree of the *spectacle* of early modern theatre (together with the homo-social and homosexual narrative *events* of the four plays in question) will be argued to have arisen out of a desire to cater to the specific (and known) sexual predilections of certain theatrical audiences. As a result, the middle of this chapter will provide a reading of John Lyly’s *Gallathea* (that centres upon the multi-valent sexual desirability of the chorister ‘play-boys’ who ‘personated’ both the play’s eponymous heroine and her lover); its end will re-evaluate the homo-erotics of Shakespeare’s Falstaff. Nevertheless, before I undertake either section of dramatic analysis, I want to muse briefly over what I consider a fascinating ‘Ur’ -text for much of the homo-eroticism in early-modern English theatre. It is the medieval French romance *Huon de Bordeaux* – a classic epic *chanson de geste* that was translated into prose by Lord Berners, and published in early-sixteenth century England.¹

The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeaux was posthumously published by Sir John Bouchier, Lord Berners, in around 1534.² Chapters 174 – 180 of this mammoth story contain the swashbuckling tale of Princess Ide (the beautiful daughter of King Florence and Queen Claryet of Aragon, who died in labour producing the royal couple’s only child). Ide’s story is an extended account of cross-dressing, cross-gendered performance and – ultimately – of divinely sanctioned sexual

transformation. As it unfolds, however, Berners' mid-sixteenth-century readers were presented with a narrative that almost immediately plunges into the sexually liminal, and were treated to a plot that ranges across incest, the vicissitudes of gender impersonation and sex-change, to homo-eroticism and (in its conclusion) what would appear to be an unambiguous sanctioning of lesbian love.

As the romance starts, the reader of *Huon de Bordeaux* is quickly informed that when Ide 'came to the age of .xv. yere she was beautyfull/ wyse, and sage'; but also, significantly, that her apparent good fortune was tainted by the fact that (perhaps due to the absence of a maternal figure at court):³

her father, kynge Florence, louyed [Ide] so well *that* he coud neuer be satysfyed with lokyng vpon her [and] oftentymes [that] he kissed her holdyng her in his armes [... since] in beauty as then she passyd all other women of y^e worlde / for god and nature had employed al theyr study to forme her/ ther was never a man *that* saw her but that louyed her, & so did her father [...]. (*Huon* 691 - 2)

In a point that I will come back to below, implicit in this statement is the somewhat disturbing fact that both God and nature had connived to construct Ide's body *too* beautifully to be resisted by the male gaze (and that it was therefore her objectified, passive status – rather than any active sense of agency – that led on to her father's overpowering incestuous desire); setting this appalling supposition temporarily aside, however, as the story proceeds, King Florence soon announces (unilaterally and before an assembly of his courtiers) that it is his intention to marry his daughter (despite a premonitory protest from Lord Sorbare that 'it is worse then bogery to hym that wil ploute his own proper blode by hymselfe engendered [...]') (*Huon* 693 - 4)).

Ide is greatly disturbed by this news, and is encouraged to escape by Lord Sorbare and one of her own Ladies-in-Waiting (with whom we are informed Yde 'clypped and kyssed' and 'all wepyng [...] kyst her mouth and eyen [...]') (*Huon* 698 and 697)). The triumvirate form an escape committee and quickly decide that 'for the saluacyon of the damoysselles body' (the spiritual, and yet worldly and corporal, framework within which they are forced operate in order to avert further physical abuse) the Lady-in-waiting will contravene the Deuteronomic law that prohibits women from putting on men's raiment and:

bear to [Ide] the aparaille of a man, [so] that at the oure of midnyght she shulde araye her therwith /and then shew her let her go out of the palays and come to the stable, where as she shall fynd [...] the best horse that her father hath redy for her to lepe on [...] (*Huon* 698)

The plan duly succeeds and (like Shakespeare's comic heroines who are to follow her, and even Arrabella Stuart) Ide becomes another newly empowered female heroine embarking upon a transvestite escape. Her journey takes her from Aragon (in north eastern Spain), through Lombardy (in north western Italy) and, finally, into Germany.⁴

Upon arrival at her destination, Ide (who has chosen to retain both her male attire and persona throughout her entire voyage) becomes the servant of a German 'gentleman' who is himself

immediately leaving in support of Holy Roman Emperor's fight against the evil forces of the King of Castile. En-route back south towards Rome, though, the party in which Ide travels is attacked by some 'vii. score spaynardys' and, despite the fact that Ide 'rode before her mayster, couchyd her spere and strake a spanyarde there clene thurgh the body' (*Huon* 703), the superior number of attackers are not averted, and straight away the Spaniards:

ran in amonge the almayns, who ryght valyantly defended them, but theyr defence could not auayle them for fynally they were all slayne, so that none scaypd alyue / but alonly [sic] yde who dyd bere her so valyauntly that she slewe .iiii. of the spanyardes, but when she sawe that her mayster and all his company were slayn with her sworde in her hande all bloody, she fled away [...] (*Huon* 703 - 4).

As might be expected in a narrative that has evidently set out to construct the strongest possible sense of 'blood and guts' virility for its cross-gendered female subject (who, it must be stressed, is by this stage out-fighting scores of skilled Spanish and German mercenaries), after this close shave, Ide almost immediately encounters a band of murderous thieves who (fortunately for the piquancy of the narrative but somewhat unfortunately for Ide) take her as their homo-erotic prisoner (and there are therefore obvious implications for this romance as a possible source for the cross-dressing plot of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*). Taking Ide (and taking her to be a man) the brigands who capture her decide that she is 'so fayre a yonge man [that] it shulde be great damage to slye hym' (*Huon* 706) and insist instead that they will teach 'him' to steal and murder alongside them.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona then meets *As You Like It* as Berners serves up a succulent mind's eye mud-wrestling contest, and Ide is informed that she will have to 'wrestle' the head thief for her liberty. The reader is therefore tantalisingly taken to observe Ide as she:

quyckely toke the thefe / who thoughte to have borne her to the erth / [and ...] drewe hym so sore to her *that* he could scant haue any breth/ and [...] cast hym soo rudely to the erth against a stone that he was therewith in a swone / and with the fall all his teth brast [sic] in his mouth [...] (*Huon* 706 - 7)

After this victory, Ide's (increasingly tumescent) biography of masculine endeavour is then further engorged with blood as Berners informs his readers that (now a somewhat Macbeth, or Coriolanus, like figure) Ide 'fought fyersly amonge tham, and cut of [sic] armes and shulders, & claue some to the brayne / [...] so that she slew fyue of thefes or she departed [...]' (*Huon* 707).

After such a highly eventful journey, it is thus a metamorphosed and decidedly man-warriorish Ide who finally arrives in Rome, and, as she does so, is given a what is by now familiar (male) homo-erotic reception by 'the emperoure and the Romaines [who] saw the goodly yonge man who so humbly had saluted them [and] gretly regarded him for the beaute that they saw in him' (*Huon* 708). As soon as Ide settles in Rome, however, the sub-textual *lesbian* dynamic that has been lying dormant since Ide's 'clyppinge and kyssing' of her Lady-in-Waiting in Aragon is also re-awoken.

In a piece of exposition that is clearly rather confused about the gender of its personal pronouns and adjectives (and that runs counter to the general grammatical treatment of Ide thus far – that has depicted Ide as she is regarded by others: male), readers are *now* informed that the Emperor's daughter, Olive, 'beheld greatly the yongue squier and greatly [...] praised *her* in *her* corage, bycause of the meruaylous great beaute that was in *her* / wenyng to *her* that *she* had been a man' (*Huon* 709 my italics). Olive therefore 'often tymes gladly regardyd yde, and began in her harte sore to loue *her*'; whereas Ide, 'parsieved' Olive and seems to have preferred to rest (for the moment at least) within the relatively safe realm of androgynous celibacy, therefore 'pray[ing] to our lorde lesu chryste that he myght so dele *that* she be not acused nother of man or women [...]' (*Huon* 710 - 11).

Ide's arrival in Rome is unavoidably, however, the start of the lesbian romance that is intended to form the crux of this section of *Huon de Bordeaux's* plot and narrative. Significantly therefore, Berners almost completely drops Ide's constructed masculine identity at this point (both linguistically and in terms of Ide's own masculinised performances) so as to allow a uniquely female homo-erotic dynamic to emerge more clearly between Ide and Olive in the text. Ominously though, the blossoming love between this pair of virgins is also almost immediately put on hold when the spectre of the King of Castile is, once again, invoked by means of a promised attack that is reported to the Roman Emperor, and in which it is claimed that 'he wyl haue his pleasure of your doughter, & [...] make you to dye of a shameful deth by cause ye haue refused to gyue your doughter in maryage [...]' (*Huon* 711).

The entire romance has, in many ways, been building up to this point: Ide, briefly glimpsed as a woman at rest, must now reassume her chivalric, masculinised and pugilistic gender in order to fight for the honour of her newly found Princess (who clearly tropes Ide's own beauty and innocent virginal virtue whilst in Aragon). Using this device, then, Ide is shrewdly set up as *her* own avenger and is simultaneously allied with the general forces of good that are represented by the Holy Roman Empire; in defending the chaste Olive, Ide's self-fashioned agency is thus used to correct the unregulated run of transgressive masculine desire that has proceeded apace throughout the narrative (beginning with her father's incestuous abuse and concluding with the proposed rape of Olive by the King of Castile), and Ide is set up to right all the wrongs of her own story in a concluding display of virility. Berners does not let his readers down in this respect, and Ide immediately asserts herself with a vengeance.

Taking charge of the situation like a Joan of Arc figure (and there are therefore equally clear implications for Shakespeare's first tetralogy) Ide demands: 'let me haue men to fyght with them, and I wyll loke upon them or they come any nerer / and by the grace of god I shall cause them to bye derely the dystruccyon that they haue made in your countre' (*Huon* 711). It is an offer that the Holy Roman Emperor can do nothing but fall back upon, and he does so gladly. Nevertheless, in the instructions to the Roman court that follow, the Emperor goes significantly further than a

mere acceptance of aid, and he deliberately delineates the, by now, marked contrast that is increasingly apparent between his own martial impotence and frailty (as a true man) and the contrasting strength and virility of his female foil (the self-fashioned man-woman Ide). His instruction:

syrs, loke ye do as moche for hym as ye wolde do for me, ye knowe well I am old and feble, and can bere armure no lenger / nor I am not able to ryde as I myghte haue done or this tyme / wherefore I desyre you, & also commaunde you all on payne of youre lyues to do euery thyng that he commaundethe in the stede of me as well as thoughe I dyd commaunde you myne owne parsones, for he that dothe the contrary, he shall lose his hede without any other redempcyon [...] (*Huon* 712 - 13)

therefore constructs Ide as Holy Roman Emperor (because in it she is invested with *complete* power over the entire Roman army by proxy and will act 'in the stede of' the Roman Emperor himself). Ide accordingly assumes the weighty mantle of state, and commands her armies both as an inspired general *and* as one of the most significant leaders in Christendom; Berners' readers are consequently informed (in the language of divine authority) that Ide '*ordeyned .iii. batayles/ y' two fyrst bataylles [...] led by two great lordes / and the thyrde yde dyd gyde it*' (*Huon* 713 my italics), and, equally, that 'she rode by her bataylles and encoraged her men, and mouyed them to do valyauntly' (*Huon* 714).

As the *mêlée* of conflict develops, readers are again treated to a catalogue of the maiden Ide's extraordinary strength, intelligence, courage and heroism. Placed in a position from which they may observe her virile and martial performance they are informed that:

[Ide] encountered with a knyght, nephue to the kynge of Spayne / [who] receyued suche a stroke, that for all his armure ydes spere wente clene thughe his body [...] that] she slewe with the same spere dyuers other / and when the spere was broken, / then she drew out her good sworde, the whiche the emperoure had geuen her / [and also that] then she came to a notable duke of Spayne, vncler to the Kynge, to whom she gave suche a stroke with her good sworde that she slaue his hede to the tethe, and so fell downe dede / then she dassed into the thyckest presse / and ever dyd chese out of the greatest parsonages, and slew many of them for she thought the more that were slayne of the great men, the more shulde her enemyes be afrayed, therefore, she chese out such one after another [...] (*Huon* 714 - 5).

Just as Ide's belligerent display is reaching its climactic peak, however, readers are also subtly informed that they are not the only 'audience' for whom Ide's enactment of masculine performatives is intended, because:

the lady Olyue had well regarded the hye prowesse of yde / wherby she louyd her so in her hart that she smyled for ioye, and sayde to herselfe, 'yonder yonge knyght I do giue my loue / the which I neuer before graunted to any man leuyng / but it is good right and reason that I graunt my loue to yde' [...] (*Huon* 714 - 5)

In a curious inversion, then, Ide (herself a chaste princess) is witnessed wielding two weighty symbols of masculine right, power and authority (the Holy Roman Emperor's rather phallic lance and his 'good' sword) as she penetrates the male bodies of soldiers whose own leader's intention is to penetrate the body of another chaste princess by means of rape. Moreover, the second of

these two princesses is herself observing all of Ide's performances as they are enacted. Yet what is even more interesting to observe than this assertion of what is possible from a maiden's body is the fact that when combat concludes (and Ide has achieved her victory), the performative nature of the gender (and role) reversals that Ide has up until this point enacted (and perhaps therefore the illusionistic nature of gender itself) is *itself* troped by the intriguing image that Berners chooses to represent Ide's flawless performance of pugilistic masculinity.

When Ide is awarded high office following her successful command of the battles, the metaphor that is chosen to describe her all but acknowledges the fact that her masculinity is a non-existent projection. Even in her highest moment of glory, then, Ide is seen to be (perhaps a parody of a Galenic sexual reversal, and certainly) a mere *reflection* of bona fide masculinity (rather than a true anatomical manifestation of masculinity *itself*). Ide is informed by the Emperor: 'thou shall be the *myrour* for al other knyghtes to encourage them to do wel [...] we therefore make you our fyrst chaumberlayne and hye constable of all our empyre Romaine' (*Huon* 717 *my italics*). Ide's example to the masculine world of the court (and her future performances of courtly duties) are crucially, then, *not* constructed in terms of a veritable sense of masculinity, but rather as a reversed *reflection* (or inversion) of what men might aspire to be. The impossible dream of the reunited (and therefore perfect) whole of Aristophanes divided hermaphrodite is thus briefly (if illusionistically) glimpsed in the balance of masculine and feminine identities that stretch across the mirror in Berners' metaphor – important in which image, of course, is the fact that Ide is constructed as the opposite, or mirror image of masculinity, not its homologue. Despite some rather extraordinary masculine performances (that are certainly more strenuous than vaulting over a ditch), Ide does not actually *become* male at this point.

Almost inevitably then (and perhaps following on from the hints at insubstantiality and illusion that underlie this whole previous section), in what is about to happen in Berners' narrative, every behavioural success that Ide has thus far *enacted* will appear to be hollow, and her endeavours are soon to be seen as merely leading towards a narrative fall of more extraordinarily monumental proportions; because the most significant *consequence* of Ide's phallic projections is the fact that the princess Olive is so dazzled by the shimmering haze of Ide's feminine (and yet super-masculised) persona that she 'loued her in such wyse that she coude not lyue one day without y^r sight of her, she was so take with loue' (*Huon* 720). The Emperor (also keen for a union between his daughter and this exemplary 'male') now vitally informs his court that a marriage between the pair will test the performance of Ide's constructed gender beyond its limits. The Emperor informs his privy council that: 'he wolde that [Olive] shulde be maryed, to the entente *that she myght haue hayers to enioye his londes after his dyscese*' (*Huon* 720 *my italics*). What is crucial about what happens next in *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeux*, though, is that when Ide is confronted by the fact that she is actually expected to perform the *biological* role of the male (in the act of sexual congress) and by the fact that she must *inseminate* Olive, her masculine persona finally begins to deflate; Ide articulates a desperate plea to the Emperor that he 'take

aduyce that [his] doughter, who is so fayre, may be maryed to some hye prynce and pusaunte, to the entent that yf [he] shulde haue any busynes that he myght be of power to ayde and to sucour [him]' (*Huon* 721). Eventually, however, she succumbs, and accepts the proposed marriage, and at this point, the potentially tragic outcome of all that Ide has hitherto performed in Berners' yarn is subtly augmented by an impossible consensus of opinion that is set up in which Olive, her father and the *entire* court expect the young couple to marry, produce heirs and reign happily as Emperor and Empress after the current ruler's death. A sense of spiralling haste (and divinely orchestrated destiny) is thus invoked as Olive confesses: 'I thank god of this fayre aduenture that is fallen me *this day* / for I shall haue hym that I haue loued beste [...]' (*Huon* 722 my italics).

The unstable atmosphere that is created for readers at this moment is one that should really lead on to a catastrophic conclusion: Ide's gender – rapidly becoming a thing of shreds and patches – is tottering on the verge of collapse; readers know – of course – that she will *not* be able to perform the *biological* role that is expected of a male. *Despite* her heat and vigour on the battlefield, they understand that her *anatomy* will stubbornly remain that of a woman. They also surely know the penalties for male impersonation and lesbianism that existed and, to make things worse, the oppressive sense of impending doom that Berners has set up is chronologically telescoped by Olive, who immediately solicits for 'haste that this be done' and implores Ide 'let us go to the church to be wedded, for me thynke we ought to do so' (*Huon* 722 - 23).

The point that I want to make here is that Ide's persona has truly reached the limits of what is *performable* at this stage; she can go no further; sex may well have its *discursive* limits; but, in the case of Ide, we now witness it graphically demonstrated that it also has its *performative* ones. Ide (and her readers) know that it is a clear biological impossibility for her to perform the task of the male in the [re]production of children that she is expected to undertake and, in a moment in which Ide's *gender* is also about to collapse back onto clichéd notions of femininity (that have always existed for her body), we therefore read that:

all her blode chaunged, she wyste not what to do, all her body trymbelid; [so that] for fere she callyd vpon our lorde god ryght petuously to herselfe, and prayed to god to haue petye of her, and to counsayle her what was best for her to do / for she sawe that parforce the emperoure wold mary her to his doughter [...] (*Huon* 723).

The blood that had so engorged Ide as she slew and butchered, massacred and slaughtered her way to the height of the Holy Roman Empire (and that is vital to the performance of male sexual acts) drains even from Ide's cheeks as she now seems to succumb to a bout of chlorosis (the form of anaemia that was characteristic of girls at puberty), and the mighty warrior, in a moment in which she really needs hot blood and phallic tumescence, returns to the tremulous state of maid. Unlike Isis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, then (or even Lyly's Gallathea or Phyllida – for we do not know which of them will change sex), Ide's transformation is *not* completed by divine intervention in *advance* of her wedding service – and the whole marriage is thus rendered decidedly homo-erotic: as the couple are wed, readers are even given an enigmatic hint of the

voyeuristic complicity that they (together with the entire male community of Rome) share in this lesbian marriage, because a slip [?] of Berners' pen informs us that 'euery man ran to se [sic] the new *brydes* [...]' (*Huon* 724 my italics).

In what is a fairly unique scenario in Renaissance literature, then, readers are brought to the realisation that there has been a *real* homo-erotic (and homosexual) usurpation of the performatives of a marriage ceremony. The sort of word-play that Ganymede, Orlando and Aliana will later undertake with their illocutionary and perlocutionary *speech acts* in the forest of Arden has therefore actually been *enacted* here in the central court of the Holy Roman Empire – and *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeux* consequently presents two women who are legally married by the Church of Rome.⁵ Yet even more transgressively than this, readers are subsequently taken *into* the lesbian bridal chamber (a location that has carefully had all other characters from the narrative securely locked without its walls). Accordingly, they observe these two young women as they make love with each other *before* any sexual transformation has taken place in the body of Ide that might heterosexually 'legitimise' this relationship or render Ide a 'true' man by altering her reproductive biology.

With the lovers secure in the intimacy of Olive's bed, readers are tantalisingly made privy to their kisses, caresses and love-making – actions that (for obvious reasons) stops only short of performing penetrative phallocentric sex (an act that is coyly referred to in the text as 'y^e thyng'). We therefore read that:

Yde locked fast the dore, to the entent that none shuld here them / than he cam to the bed, and layde hym down on the bed syde / & sayd to Olyue / 'my ryght swete loue, god gyue you good nyght / for as for me, I can gyue you no good / for I fele suche a dissease, the whych greueth me sore' / and therewith she kyst Olyue, who answered and said / my swete loue, ye ar the thing in the worlde that I moost desyre / for the bounte and swetnes that I know in you, ye do with me as it shal please you / & to the entent that ye shall not thynke that I haue so great desire that ye shuld do y^e thyng, the whyche of right ought to be done bytwene man and woman / I am contente to forbere if this .xv. daies / & bycause that dyuers folkes are here aboute to herken vs / I am contente to gyue you trewes / for we shall haue space enough hereafter to spote vs / for I knowe such noblenes in you that I am sure ye wyll kepe your fayth & trouth to me / for I am chast, & so ye shall fynde me / it soffyseth me to clyppe and kysse you / and as for y^e preuy loue, I am content for this tyme, syn it is your pleasure, to forbere it.' Than yde answered / 'fayre lady, I wyll not refuse youre wyll.' thus they passed that nyght with clyppying and kyssynge [...] (*Huon* 724 - 5)

The narrative has come full circle at this point and Ide has reverted back to the 'clypinge and kyssinge' of another woman with which her romance began.

When the two weeks have elapsed during which Olive promised to restrain herself and to forbear from soliciting 'y^e thyng' from Ide (and despite much 'clypinge and kyssinge'), it seems that Olive's frustration is great enough for a more insistent demand to be made upon her 'husband's' virility. The scene therefore develops into what constitutes the second great emotional crescendo of this narrative, and readers are brought to witness Ide's confession and the complete subsequent collapse of her (by now much less robustly performed) male gender:

after the fyftene daies wer past that yde had lyen with Olyue / yde touched her not but with clyppynge and kyssynge / whereof Olyue was sorrowfull, and said to herselfe, 'O, good lorde, I engendered in an euyl hour w^l haue maryed the goodlyest person of the worlde / and the moost worthyest and hardiest that euer was gyrde wyth swerde and rode on hors / he maketh noo manner of semblaunce to do that thyng that I so haue desyred' / than she drew nere to yde and touched hym / than yde, who knewe ryght well what her desyre was / he turned to herward and wolde hyde himselfe no lenger fro [sic] her / but all wepyng cryed her mercy, and shewed her fro the begynnynge to the endynge the maner of all her aduenture / and how that she was a woman and was fledde away bycause her father wolde haue married heerr [sic] himselfe. And whan Olyue vnderstode yde / she was right sorowfull / howbeit she comforted yde, and said / 'my right swete loue, discomforte not yourselfe / for ye shall not bee bewrayed for me nother to no man nor woman lyuyng / we are wedded togyther, I wyl be good and trewe to you syn ye haue kept youre selfe so trewly / with you I wyll vse my tyme and passe my destany syn it is thus, for I se wel it is the pleasure of our lord godde.' (*Huon* 725 - 6).

It is a touching scene, demonstrating a substantial degree of commitment and care between these two women, who seem at last to have come to terms with the truth of their situation; but significantly, also, it contains a moment of revelation that is (to all intents and purposes) responded to immediately by a complete acceptance of the (now clearly) lesbian relationship that has come about between both of this narrative's female protagonists.

The intimacy, understanding and support of this uniquely female world will soon be rudely penetrated, however (yet again), by an agent of patriarchal male authority; for readers are immediately informed that the two lovers have been 'herde well' by the industrious espionage of a male page who ('beyng in a chaumbre that ioyned fast vnto their chaumbre') overhears Ide's confession and immediately betrays them to the Emperor. Enraged, and desirous of ocular proof of Ide's muliebriety, the Roman ruler instantly commands that :

a bayne [...] be made redy in his owne chambre, whearin he wolde haue ide to be bayned, to the entent that he myght know the trouthe or she scaped away, for he sayd he wold not suffre suche boggery to be used [...] (*Huon* 727)

The Emperor's daughter-in-law is duly brought before him and, when she refuses to remove her clothes, he declares: 'I wyll not bere it for I wyll se you naked / for yf I fynde it trewe that hathe ben shewed me / bothe you and my doughter shall be brent [sic]' (*Huon* 727). Ide can clearly do nothing to avoid supplying – or to deny – the ocular evidence of her womanhood, and she now produces her second weeping confession of the day. As a result, the Emperor's council is swiftly convened to see justice done upon her.

Not surprisingly then (because this is a French Romance and we have earlier in this dissertation seen the punishments for lesbianism that were circumscribed by French law) 'the peers & lordes of Rome [...] iudged [Ide] to be brent' (*Huon* 728); to which verdict her saintly response is to lift her hands up to God and the Virgin Mary, praying that her soul be accepted into heaven. It is only at this *very last minute* (much in the same way that Duval's discovery of 'something virile in Le Marcis produced an eleventh hour saving of Marie's life – and only *after* she, too, had set out upon a lesbian relationship), that the sexual metamorphosis that is by now the only possible way out for these two female characters takes place. We therefore read that:

The same houre that yde was in her prayers / sodenly there appered in the chaumbre a great clere light / and therewith a meruelous swete odoure / that it semed all y^e chambre to be full of ensence and spyces aromatyke / then anone after they herd an angelyke voyce sent from oure lorde god & sayd / 'thou emperour of Rome, our lorde god commaundeth the [sic] by me / that thou be not so hardye to touch yde to do her any hurte / for oure lorde god hath done her y^e grace for the goodnes that is in her / he doth consent and wyll by his dyuyne puyssaunce / that she be chaunged in nature and become a parfeyght man as all other be with out any difference / & also god commaundeth that the page whom thou has in pryson, that thou let hym go quyt / for that he sheweth the [sic] was of troug / this mornynge yde was a woman, and now he is a man / Also god commaundeth the [sic] make thyself redye, for thou shalt lyue here in this world but .viii. dayes longer [...] (Huon 728 - 9)

The events were, clearly, a bolt-out-of-the-blue for the Emperor who unfortunately has his own death transposed with that of Ide and is told:

fro [sic] henceforth let yde and olyue thy doughter haue gouernynge of thy realme who or this yere be passes shall haue betwene them a sonne who shall be named Croissant, who shall do meruelles whan he cometh to age [...] (Huon 728)

but the *deus ex machina* is a *fait-accompl*i and

with those wordes the angell wanysshed away / and left themperour [sic] and his lordes and al the people of Rome in great ioy for y^e euident myracle that our lord god had sent by the prayer of yde / who and Olyue his wyfe had great ioy and thanked our lord Iesu Chryst / than the feest and tryumphe began agayne in Rome. the day past and the nyght came, and yde and Olyue went to bed together, and toke there sport in such wyse that the same nyght was gotten & engendered the fayre Croyssant, whereby y^e ioy dobled in the cite of Rome [...] (Huon 728)

The narrative then duly concludes with a few swift sentences that explain that the Emperor appropriately died on time, that Ide and Olive were crowned Emperor and Empress of Rome and (with the exception of only one dead man) they all lived happily ever after ...

So, what's all this about? and why have I decided to spend the last nine pages of this chapter framing *Huon of Bordeaux* up as the 'homo-erotic 'Ur'-text for much early-modern drama'? Well, in essence, I think it is because the story of Ide and Olive has all the classic hallmarks of romantic homosexual fiction. The story of a pair of female lovers in *Huon of Bordeaux* sets same-sex relationships (in this case one between two women) apart from the rest of the 'world' of its text, and establishes a sexual and emotional bond between them that is based on equality, understanding and harmony. In this narrative, until she meets Olive, Ide has had to cope with male attacks, threats of incestuous sex, a barrage of assaults, and a whole series of gendered masculine presumptions. What is clear in *Huon of Bordeaux*, however, is that it is *only in the arms of another woman* that either of these females will find agreement, peace and understanding. I do not honestly believe that the narrative in any place denies this fact.

Moreover, in contrast to setting Ide up as a 'butch-dyke' (excuse my anachronism), or as a male whose anatomical development has been stunted as a result of insufficient heat, this romance makes it consistently clear in that Ide is a conventional female figure (she is slight, beautiful and

overtly feminine in Aragon) and that she is only *acting* in this (particularly aggressively male) gendered way because she *has to* in order to survive the rigours of a particularly unaccommodating and antagonistic patriarchal society. As a beautiful young woman, Ide is systematically objectified and abused by the masculine society that surrounds her; as a result, she genders herself male and *acts* like a man. What is rather incredible, however (if we are to invoke the 'one-sex' model at least), is that there is in no part of this story an understanding that Ide's undoubted heat, exertion, vigour and phallic *puissance* have any effect at all on her actual anatomical sex-identity. When Ide is finally 'made male' at the end of her narrative, then, the transformation is a set up as an unequivocally *miraculous* event (and, like Duval's 'transformation' of Le Marcis into 'something virile', it is a conversion that seems to sanction the lesbian relationship that exists and has *already* been consummated). Moreover, other than incense, a bit of smoke, and a somewhat Wizard-of-Oz-like voice declaring Ide male, there is no actual *proof* (ocular or otherwise) that this transformation has actually taken place.

In chapter four of this dissertation (in relation to the degree of freedom and agency that is given to female characters) I will warn against seeing Renaissance plays as utopian sexual playgrounds in which radical notions of gendered and sociological freedom are consistently articulated for women. I will even go so far as to state that, in my understanding of the representations of female agency in much Renaissance comedy:

I cannot help but consistently return to the fact that narrative closures of these plays (that stress normative heterosexual marriage as *the* inevitable *telos* of life and concomitantly shore up the period's received gender systems) are profoundly *recuperative* of the multi-valent erotic and egalitarian possibilities that may well have preceded them.⁶

In the case of Ide and Olive, however, as with the homo-erotics of Gallathea, Phyllida, and Falstaff (and his 'boys') that are to follow, I am as sure as I can be that the delineations of *alternative* sexualities that precede (fantastical and uncertain) sexual transformations are concrete glimpses of a different, perhaps a better, sexual world. Ide and Olive find their happiness not by acting in accordance with the limited conservative gender roles that are set out by heterosexual patriarchal values, but by rejecting them entirely.

II

John Lyly's *Gallathea* was twice entered in the Stationers Register. It first appeared on April 1, 1585 — pursuant to which no printed edition was forthcoming. Its second entry, however (under the name of Joan [the widow] Broome, and dated October 4, 1591), led to the printing of a quarto in 1592; the title page to which reads:

[within lace border] *Gallathea.*/ as it was playde before/ the Queenes Maiestie at/ Greene-
wiche, on Newyeeres/ day at night./[.] / [leaf] *By the Chyldren of Paules.*/ [group of
ornaments]/ AT LONDON,/Printed by Iohn Charl-/woode for the VVid-/dow Broome./
1592.

From this information – together with a Revels Accounts entry showing payment to the chorister actors of St. Paul's Cathedral for a performance on 1 January, 1587/8 (the only instance of coincidence between Paul's Boys, Elizabeth, Greenwich and New Year's Day) – we may reasonably conclude three things: (i) that *Gallathea* was written for the company of young male actors who were (in theory at least) attached to the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, (ii) that the play was presented at least once at Court before Queen Elizabeth, and (iii) that it formed part of Paul's Boys' regular theatrical repertoire whilst they were under the control of Thomas Gyles (master of the choristers from 22 May 1584 until July 1600, and manager of the cathedral precinct playhouse from 1584 to 1591).⁷

The central plot of Lyly's drama is written in the genre of a pastoral romance.⁸ Its narrative ostensibly concerns two young (and equally beautiful) female virgins who are dressed in boys' apparel by their shepherd fathers so that they might escape the fate of becoming ritual virgin-sacrifices to the sea god Neptune (in a ceremony that is performed once every five years in order to save their Humberside village from destruction as a result of a threatened inundation). The thematic focus of *Gallathea*'s FTM disguise plot is therefore clear, and much of the play's comic and erotic energy comes from the further narrative complications that arise as these two 'girls' (Gallathea and Phyllida), each semi-unbeknowing of the other's 'true' sex-identity, proceed to fall in love with what they perceive (but with increasing suspicions) to be a member of the 'opposite' sex.

On a textual level at least, then, *Gallathea*, like *Huon of Bordeaux*, presents a lesbian homo-erotic dilemma (in terms of plot) that remains unresolved until the audience are finally informed that one of the girls (we are not told which) will eventually be transformed into a 'real' boy by the goddess Venus – a metamorphosis that is due to take place immediately prior to a marriage that is set up to occur offstage and that will, significantly, remain *un*-witnessed by any theatrical spectator. As Venus puts it: 'neither of them shall know whose lot it / shall be till they come to the church door. One shall be; doth it suffice?' (V.iii. 173-5).

Looking at things from a meta-theatrical perspective, of course, such an open-ended narrative conclusion doth *not* suffice at all. Not, at least, if a critic wishes to infer that Renaissance audiences actually expected (or accepted) some kind of erotic 'normalisation' by means of a conventional heterosexual marriage ceremony. The glaringly obvious problem that is posed by Lyly's *Gallathea* is, therefore, that in terms of its actual spectacle, *no* audience has ever been invited to the church door at which they might witness this sex change or the performatives of the marriage ceremony that follow it inside (and that is intended to sanction the new (hetero)sexual union). Consequently, far from actually *presenting* heterosexual closure as a result of an anatomical sex-change, given what is *physically* presented to theatrical spectators during the course of *Gallathea*, Lyly only *alludes* to heterosexual 'normality', and spectators are thus left with an interpretative choice between just two homo-erotic phenomena: (i) the gay

erotics of watching two boy-actors dressed as boys, wooing each other (and, I would like to assert, their audiences) or (ii) the lesbian erotics of watching two female *characters* doing the same; neither of which scenarios is adequately resolved by Lyly's clumsy *dea in scaena* as *deus ex machina*. Quite simply, then, if heterosexual closure is his objective, if it is the inescapable *telos* and *only* possible narrative outcome for this play, then Lyly fails miserably – because Venus leaves *far too many* loose ends flapping around (even if audiences *do* suspend their disbelief and accept her promise of sexual transformation and a marriage that will eventually be fulfilled somewhere else, in a mythological continuation of this fiction that extends beyond the temporal limits of Lyly's dramatic narrative, and its theatrical performances).

Interestingly enough, then, it is precisely this *unfulfilled* promise of an offstage, 'normative', heterosexual conclusion to *Gallathea* (reliant as it is upon a divinely ordained and supernaturally controlled biological metamorphosis: 'Then shall it be seen that I can turn one of them to be a / man and that I will' (V.ii.142)) that has recently led to significant critical attention being paid to the play as a piece of literary evidence that supports the notion of gender flux and sexual transformation as an anatomical possibility within the Renaissance mind.⁹ Once again, then, in asserting a manifesto of performativity above biology, such criticism would seem to fly in the face of *Gallathea*'s obvious *homosexual* implications and to rely upon notions of sexual fluidity that I hope to have demonstrated as inconsistent with practically every early modern medical, legal (and even folkloric) opinion in the period (and that were certainly outmoded by the 1580s, and the date of this play's first performances).

Such readings also pay scant attention to the *internal* evidence that is provided by a close reading of this play; because, in my opinion, a 'sex-change and heterosexual closure' reading of *Gallathea* can be undermined with a relatively straightforward, threefold, argument because:

(i) It is immaterial to the homo-erotic subtext of this narrative (and to the phenomenological experience of *observing* this drama performed) whether or not such a transformation ever actually takes place (and this is precisely why Lyly evidently feels no dramaturgical necessity to *stage* a transformation scene for his spectators).

(ii) Venus' narrative promise of sexual metamorphosis is just that, a fragile promise: the pledge that she makes is entirely reliant upon a world of fantasy and the divine intervention of a mythological figure who is in fact known *not to exist* by every single member of Lyly's audience (and whose proposal is *itself* received with incredulity by her fellow divinities – including a flabbergasted Neptune, and a Diana who is moved to inquire: 'Is it possible?' (V.iii. 144))

(iii) On a metatheatrical level, too, both textual evidence (and performance conventions) suggest that the bodies of the chorister-actors presenting *Gallathea* were used to augment a sub-textual, yet precisely located, underpinning of their *own* physical and sexual appeal (both in their on-stage and in their off-stage incarnations), rather than the *characters* of the play's narrative.

I therefore aim to argue in this section that, instead of focussing on the 'normality' and 'inevitability' of *Gallathea*'s presumed companionate heterosexual conclusion, the play instead articulates a profoundly (masculine) homo-erotics; that it deliberately *fixes* the sex-identity of its

young male performers; that it concretely defines the physical object of an audience's erotic desires as the bodies of its young boy-actors; and that it establishes the adolescent male form as both the *locus* of its meta-theatricality, and the *focus* of its (homo)sexual desire.

Throughout *Gallathea*, then, I think that Lyly is at pains to exploit the sexual resonances that were open to him as the writer for a company of young chorister-actors and that, in this text, a power dynamic is quickly established in which boys are ubiquitously presented as objects to be desired, mastered and controlled.¹⁰ To support this, and despite *Gallathea*'s narrative being ostensibly about young girls, the word 'boy' is itself used no fewer than forty eight times in the 1592 quarto (and is therefore uttered on average about once every thirty lines). It is a noun that is repeatedly employed in order to remind spectators of precisely what it is that they are watching and finding so attractive.¹¹ The recurrent sound of this word washes over *Gallathea*'s spectators and, combined with the fact that nearly all of the play's 'girls' are consistently dressed as boys, it thereby creates a meta-theatrical frame of reference within which notions of femininity are entirely effaced. Far from attempting to represent the female body in any significant way, then, Lyly even goes as far as to modify his source material (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*)¹² so that both of his 'girls' can be 'disguised' as boys, and he therefore subsequently uses a *new* twin FTM disguise plot in order to allow boy-actors to present the voice, costume and gender semiotics of the biological entities that they in fact actually *were* much more clearly. In a point that I will further develop below, such facts inexorably stress the beauty, desirability (and, if we are to believe the sexualised accounts of chorister-actor companies – and particularly Paul's Boys – that are presented by Hillebrand and Gair, also the possible sexual availability) of Lyly's adolescent chorister-actors *over and above* that of the female characters whom they personated.¹³

Once Phyllida and Gallathea are dressed as boys, the only other female left amongst the twelve speaking characters of the mortal world is the rather lacklustre virgin sacrifice Hebe (whose categorical *dismissal* as an object of sexual desire will also be discussed below).¹⁴ At his very first appearance (which is as a boy), too, the Gallathea actor immediately informs his audience that his companion, Phyllida, has a more than superlative beauty; yet it is precisely *because* 'her' exquisite form is also framed up as that of a *boy* ('yonder boy is in mine / eye too beautiful' (II.I. 44/45)) that Phyllida is also deemed quite so attractive. Such insistent hyperbole is clearly profoundly erotic (for, as we have seen with *Ide*, audiences are thereby led to ask themselves the erotic question: in what situation might a boy be thought of as *too* beautiful?) but it is an erotics that turns exclusively around the adolescent male body.

In Act II scene I, the character Telusa is revealed to have been drawn into an erotic gaze that is typical of nearly all sexual attraction in the play. She has 'amorously [...] glanced [her] eye [...] on [a] fair boy' (III.I. 45 - 6). What is more, for Telusa, the result of (visual) erotic fascination has been the instigation of overtly lustful desires (the nature of which is underscored by Eurota, who

describes her affection as 'beast' (III.I.42)), and the dizzy effects of looking at young boys does not stop here in Lyly's text. The hypnotic, enchanting and captivating rapture of gazing at the adolescent male form is rhythmically underscored further in this scene as Ramia also begins to chant a homo-erotic mantra of being 'thrall to that boy, that boy, that beautiful boy [...]' (III.I. 90 - 2). Telusa eventually goes so far in this scene as to articulate the profound concern that observing the beauty of boys leads on to being 'wanton in [...] thoughts, in [...] words, in [...] actions' – a thought that itself leads on to the inevitable conclusion that voyeuristic and ocular *attraction* incontrovertibly ends up in wanton sexual acts; that looking at boys ends up in performing sexualised deeds with them. Punning on the word 'die' in a clause that is linguistically balanced against a notion of abandoning chastity (as it is represented by the figure of Diana) Telusa therefore goes on to hint that she will renounce her own virginity in order to achieve orgasm (both for and) with this 'boy': 'I love Melebeus, and my deserts shall be answerable to my / desires. *I will forsake Diana for him. I will die for him.*' (III.I. 97 – 8 my italics).

Adolescent male beauty is thus articulated – both here and elsewhere in *Gallathea* – as being reason enough for any gazer to fall into a troubled state of all-consuming passion (a condition in which the simple choice must be made between sin and satisfaction, virtue and frustration). Telusa chastises herself for falling into this trap: 'O Melebeus, because thou art fair must I be fickle [...]?' (III.I.24) yet, crucially, she succumbs to an acceptance that she *will* fall. The play repeatedly falls over itself in order to connect notions of male youth to objectified beauty; and an erotic-aesthetic is therefore constructed in which the adolescent-as-sexualised-object is seen as tantalisingly desirable as boys repeatedly become the focus of the erotic gaze of other (and invariably older) characters. Given the phenomenological nature of theatrical spectatorship, such a concentrated fixation must certainly have had a profound effect in framing up the erotic focal point of audience-members themselves.

In terms of the semiotics of his costuming, too, the boy actor who personates Gallathea is (despite the fact that he is ostensibly playing a female character) *never* seen on stage other than in boy's apparel. Since the play is set in the contemporary 1580s or 1590s, then, he is certainly therefore in clothing that would have been as appropriate to a chorister-actor as it was any character in this play.¹⁵ Likewise, 'he' is repeatedly linguistically constructed before his audience as being of the exact same sex-identity as the boy-actor playing this role: he is male and a child. That the Gallathea / Tityrus actor was not called upon to attempt to provide a feminine sounding voice (that might undermine his male costume) would seem clear from Phyllida's denial of possible femininity in the observation: 'Tush, it cannot be; his voice shows the contrary' (III.II. 33).

In the very first scene of the play, the Gallathea actor outlines himself as 'but a child' (I.I. 76); yet it is manifest that (in succumbing to his/her father's wishes by giving in to the proposed disguise plot) children are expected to be compliant with the desires of the adult males who exercise positions of power over them. In the case of the Phyllida / Melebeus character, there is even a

hint as to the sexualised nature of such a power relationship; because the elder (father) Tityrus accuses his counterpart Melebeus with:

Tityrus. Did I not see, and very lately see, your daughter
in your arms, whenas you gave her infinite kisses with affection I fear me more than fatherly?

(IV.i. 37 - 9)

an accusation of paedophiliac incest that Melebeus (inadvertently) reinforces in his own defence:

Melebeus. [...] you must know
that silver hairs delight in golden locks, and the old fancies
crave young nurses, and frosty years must be thawed by
youthful fires [...]

(IV.i. 54 - 6)

In his final appearance (and much like the boy actor who will later play Rosalind in the Epilogue to *As You Like It*), the Gallathea actor also finally (and concretely) separates himself from any association with the female sex. Insisting on his masculinity, he is at pains to refer to the 'ladies' in his audience as being of 'your [and notably not *our*] sex [...]' (Epilogue 3).¹⁶

Equally significantly to my argument, once the importance of registering the physical (and immutable) presence of boy actors' bodies on stage has been articulated, the audience are swiftly informed of the homo-erotic significance of such male forms. The connotations of which are two-fold: firstly, boys are to be regarded as objects of incredible beauty and desirability (Gallathea, for example, is a character whom 'nature [hath] made [...] so fair above all' (I.i. 72/3) and who possesses 'beauty [...] to be thought worthy of [a] god.' (I.i. 61/2)); secondly, they should consistently be read as male. Gallathea's portrait of the desirable adolescent male body is thus reinforced when Phyllida (who was only dressed as a girl for a short first scene of some twenty seven lines), goes some significant way towards legitimising boys as the object of sexual desire as s/he informs her onlookers: 'It is a pretty boy and a fair. He might well have been a woman [...]' (II.i. 19/20).

Despite the obvious, and frequently insisted upon, conclusion that women and catamites are interchangeable with each other in the sexual pastimes of older men, however, I want to stress that boys *do not* in this text seem to be simple *alternatives* to women (nor can they be unproblematically substituted with women in order to heterosexually 'legitimise' the erastes/eromenos relationships that this text so evidently plays upon). In *Gallathea*, boys are continually elevated *above* women in terms of their desirability; they are placed in the realm of the gods. A blurred distinction between boys and cupids is therefore present from the second scene of the play in which one of Diana's nymphs refers to the Cupid actor as: 'Fair boy, or god, or whatever you may be [...]' (I.ii. 3). Cupid himself, once established as a deity, frequently has the adjective 'little' (I.ii. 30) employed in order to remind his audience that much of the beauty and erotic agency associated with this god lie explicitly in the fact that he (like the actor who played him) is a youthful boy. This interchangeability (not between boys and women, but between boys

and mischievous, *sexualised* gods) is further borne out on the two occasions in which Cupid himself articulates the strength of his erotic appeal.

The first is a rather traditional account of the seductive power and erotic armoury of the 'little god' – an account of the mythological apparatuses that constitute his ability to instigate love and erotic passion in others:

There is no heart so chaste but thy bow can wound, nor
eyes so modest but thy brands can kindle, nor thoughts so
stayed but thy shafts can make wavering weak and wanton.

(II.ii. 3 - 5)

Once this 'boy' has been effectively 'disarmed' of his divine paraphernalia by Diana, however, and has succumbed to having his 'wings clipp'd [...] brands quenched [...] bow burnt and [...] and] arrows broke' (V.iii. 95 - 6), Cupid reveals that there is an underlying (and essential) *lack* of significance to his status as a god as a function of his erotic power. Cupid's sex-appeal is seen to be just as strong *despite* the loss of his divine trappings, because following his disarmament he retorts to Diana:

Ay, but it skilleth not. I bear now mine arrows in mine eyes,
my wings on my thoughts, my brands in mine ears, my bow
in my mouth, so I can wound with looking, fly with
thinking, burn with hearing, shoot with speaking.

(V.iii. 97 - 100)

Throughout the speech (and also evident in the lines from Venus that precede it) the audience's sexy 'little god', Cupid, is rendered a simple boy; yet what is remarkable about this passage is that the unadorned 'boy' who survives still possesses *all* of the means of instigating sexual desire that the 'little god' Cupid had; he is clearly still thought to be as sexually alluring in his incarnation as a humanised youth as he was when a divinely equipped god. The erotic power that audiences have heard described in II. ii (a power that 'no heart' was chaste enough to resist) is thus revealed to be, quite simply, that of the eyes, ears, mouth, looks and words of a beautiful young boy. Moreover, as appears equally evident from his treatment elsewhere in the play, this boy is primarily intended to be desirable to the *male* gaze (as I would argue are the others in Lyly's company, despite the play's single performance at court for Elizabeth).¹⁷ In act V scene iii, Cupid is therefore overtly equated with the catamite figure in an invocation of the ingel of classical mythology, Jove's cup-bearer: Ganymede.

Diana, who has captured Cupid and (in an interesting reference to the power relations between masters and 'prentices' that, perhaps, goes a long way to illuminating the treatment of chorister-actors in Lyly's company) is 'using [Cupid] like a prentice, whipping him like a slave, scorning him like a beast' (V.iii. 34 - 5) suddenly reveals:

I have Cupid, and will keep him, not to *dandle in my lap* [my italics],
whom I abhor in my heart, but to laugh him to scorn that
hath made in my virgins hearts such deep scars. (V.iii. 44 - 6)

In her very effort to negate Cupid's erotic significance, then, Diana inadvertently *draws attention* to his standard figuration as the homo-erotic plaything associated with Jove (and all the more so because earlier in the play the audience have already been reminded of the fact that the boy Ganymede was selected above a girl by Jove and was 'dandled on his knee').

In the 'sacrifice' scene that is supposed to save the village from inundation, another male god, Neptune, and his male 'beast' Augur (who is tantalisingly described as a 'devourer of beauties' bowels' (V.ii. 51) in a line that may easily be interpreted as a direct reference to sodomy) augment the discerning god's preference for boys further when they reject the virgin-girl sacrifice that is offered to them. What is incredible about this moment (and as if to crack this literary allusion to Ganymede open with a steam-hammer), is that Lyly chooses to name the unfortunate girl who has been selected as the 'fairest virgin' of her village and who is therefore expected to placate the angry gods (but whom the spectators are guided to believe holds not a candle to the cross-dressed 'boys' on stage) as Hebe – the very name of the female cup-bearer whom Jove *rejected* and *replaced* with his catamite Ganymede (and *this* was because Hebe fell and exposed her indecorous, undesirable and decidedly *female* genitals before him).¹⁸ Indeed, even as *Gallathea's* Hebe sings her would-be swan-song, Lyly uses her hymn about 'chaste virgins' to negate the role of the virgin-sacrifice herself and rather chooses to paint a picture of the looks and dramatic practices of the quintessentially charming and beautiful chorister-actors who boyed-up his stage:

Farewell you chaste virgins, whose
thoughts are divine, whose faces are fair, whose fortunes are
agreeable to your affections. Enjoy and long enjoy the
pleasure of your curled locks, the amiableness of your wished
looks, *the sweetness of your tuned voices*, the content of
your inward thoughts, *the pomp of your outward shows* [...]

(V.ii. 27 – 32 my italics)

As early as the third scene of the play the audience have already twice heard from Phyllida that boys 'commit follies unseemly for [the female] sex' (I.iii. 18/19 and II.i. 20) and sexual activity has likewise been revealed to be quite high up the agenda of adolescent male interest when Gallathea comments upon the male preoccupation with virginity: 'All the blood in my body would be in my face if he should / ask me as the question amongst men is common, "Are you a maid?"' (II.i. 28/9). A differentiation between male and female children therefore seems to emerge from this text that is reliant upon a notion of *sexual activity* and *availability*. Other references to this phenomenon are also obliquely made elsewhere in the text, since boys are ubiquitously described as boys, whereas girls are, almost as uniquely, described as virgins: 'why did nature to / him, a boy, give a face so fair, or to me, a virgin, a fortune so hard?' (II.iv. 8 - 10). It is a subtle difference, but one that inadvertently reveals that the sexual activity (and therefore possible availability) of a boy is not as transparent as it is with a girl (a difference that itself becomes clearer and clearer in the play as we are gradually informed that 'Boys should be bold' (II.i. 31) and are finally presented with the homo-erotic double entendre of a chorister's sexual availability

when we are bawdily told: 'in the attire of a boy there could not / have lodged the body of a virgin' (V.iii. 122 - 3).

To sum up then, boys are consistently defined as a sex who readily commit 'follies' (II.i. 20), who are compliant with the wishes of older men, who are as beautiful as (and interchangeable with) gods, and who cannot *be* 'virgins'. There is even one exchange in which the Gallathea actor is made to pun meta-theatrically on his own sexual availability as a catamite, in the somewhat startling exchange:

Phyllida. Seeing we are both boys, and both lovers, that our affection
may have some show, and seem as it were love, let me call
thee mistress.

Gallathea. I accept that name, for divers before have call'd me
mistress.

Phyllida. For what cause?

Gallathea. Nay, there lie the mistress* [*an obsolete form of mysteries]
(IV.iv.15 - 20)

The 'wouldn't you like to know' nod and wink that is implied here (in the terrible pun between 'mistress' and 'mysteries' and the sexual play on the word 'lie' in the same sentence) openly invites some rather titillating speculation about the sexual activities that 'divers before' have committed with this boy in order for them to call him their 'mistress'.

The homo-eroticism of *Gallathea* seems to me to lie in the way that it consistently plays around with notions of meta-theatricality, in order to consistently ensure that boy-actors are seen on stage as precisely what they are: boys dressed as boys (and for some reason, boys talking in the language of bawdy and sexually savvy catamites). As Cupid points out: 'Cupid, though he be a child, is no baby' (II.ii. 6); or as Gallathea puts it 'I am but a child [...] yet not so childish [...]' (I.i. 76 - 7). Diana also points out exactly what audiences are watching in a speech that might well have been written specifically to describe the chorister-actor:

And how is your love placed? Upon pelting
boys, perhaps base of birth, without doubt weak of dis-
cretion. Ay, but they are fair [...]

(III.iv. 53 - 55)

As I close this section, I want to draw attention to one last fact. Lyly's *Gallathea* has a single setting: it takes place around a solitary oak, not too far from the Humber river, and close to pastoral land on which sheep might graze. Yet there is a second location that is *essential* to all the (sexual) action of this play – despite the fact that it is never seen on stage. It is the woods. Precisely *because* Lyly chooses never to present the action that is supposed to happen in these offstage woods, his audience are faced with a situation in which each time an actor (or actors) exit to go to this fictional place, they begin to associate the woods with the private world that

actors begin to inhabit as they walk off stage. Each time a performer claims to be leaving for the woods, then, he is in fact leaving for the tiring house, and a subliminal connection is therefore made between Lyly's offstage 'woods' and the offstage location in which actors prepare themselves or wait whilst they are not performing their roles. So why should this connection be of any importance? well, precisely because it is in *the woods* that the majority of the (hinted at but never directly shown) (homo)sexual acts of the narrative's lesbian lovers (and therefore, possibly, of the chorister-actors who play them) are supposed to be acted out.

When Gallathea finally decides that she loves Phyllida, the boy-actor observes: 'Let me follow him into the woods, and thou, sweet / Venus, be my guide' (II.iv. 10). Phyllida is likewise well aware that to 'Go / into the woods, [to] watch the good times, his best moods [is to] / transgress in love a little [...]' (II.v. 5/6). In fact, the weight of this decision to transgress is so strong (especially in the light of the previously declared 'untamed- / ness of [her] affections' (I.v. 2 - 3)) that Phyllida furiously debates the 'should I stay or should I go?' decision in the tantalisingly auto-organic language of yes, no, stop, go eroticism:

[...] I will - I dare not;
thou must - I cannot [...]
I will not - I will. Ah, Phyllida do something, nay any-
thing rather than live thus.

(II.v. 6 - 8)

before deciding:

Well, what I will do, myself
knows not, but what I ought I know too well, and so go
resolute [...]

(II.v. 10 -12)

When the pair emerge, Phyllida's decision has been proved to have been worthwhile, for she reminds Gallathea: 'You promised me in the / woods that you would love me before all Diana's Nymphs' (III.ii. 49 - 50). A reciprocal promise has also been made by Phyllida (if we are to believe Gallathea's response: 'ay, so you would love me before all Diana's nymphs' (III. ii. 51)). Only a few lines later Phyllida therefore suggests that they once again explore the erotic possibilities of their off-stage existence: 'Come, let us go into the grove and make much of one another, / that cannot tell what to think one of another' (III.ii. 55 - 6).

What will happen offstage after this play has concluded (if we are to follow the eroticised meta-theatrical lead that is provided by its leading pair of chorister-play-boys) may well not be the sexual transformation and heterosexual marriage that are promised by *Gallathea's* narrative at all – but rather the continued erotic playfulness of its chorister-actors.

III

Falstaff (who has recently been termed an 'experimental androgen')¹⁹ constitutes another interesting point of departure in an attempt to ascertain the homo-erotic significances of the interplay between 'one-sex' anatomy and Renaissance dramaturgy. Sir John Falstaff (née Oldcastle) was written and performed well after the first great wave of Vesalian anatomy, and appreciably into the scientific period that I have argued established a 'two-sex' anatomical model; yet the compositor of *II Henry IV*'s first quarto (1600) still chose to inform his prospective readers that the play was:

The/Second part of Henrie/ the fourth, continuing to his death,/ and coronation of Henrie/
the fift./ With the *humours* of sir Iohn Fal/staffe, and swaggering/ Pistoll'.

I Henry IV's title page had in 1598, in contrast, mentioned only 'the *humorous conceits* of Sir John Falstaff.'²⁰ The difference is admittedly slight, but, in a juxtaposition of early-modern drama and corporal science, it is well worth pausing over; because *Part Two*'s 'humours' may well reveal Falstaff to be a satirical *critique* of the unstable body (as it was outlined in medieval physiology), and that an interplay between medieval and late-sixteenth century clinical paradigms was exploited in these plays in order to exploit the sexual implications of medieval and earlier sixteenth-century science. This certainly appears to be the case once Falstaff's variations in heat, passion (and fluidity) are set against the more informed corporal philosophy of the late sixteenth-century.

For some reason, each play in which Jack Falstaff appears consistently appears to outline a quasi-Galenic medical subtext. The *dramatis personæ* of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* includes a doctor whose authority is critiqued in direct comparison to the ancients, yet whose namesake had only recently been made master of the medical school at Gonville College, Cambridge.²¹ The Host sarcastically refers to Dr. Caius as 'my Aesculapius²² my Galen[...]' (III.iii. 26-7) and, in a fit of pique, his rival (Sir Hugh Evans) rebuffs Master Page's notion of 'Master Doctor Caius the renowned French physician' (III. i. 56-7) with the spluttering ejaculation: 'He has no more knowledge of Hibbocrates [sic] and Galen...' (III.i. 61-2). No more knowledge of Hippocrates and Galen than whom or what we shall never know, since Shakespeare left the phrase incomplete;²³ yet what any attentive audience can't help but notice, is that a satirical undercurrent of 'measuring up' to the authoritative benchmarks of classical medicine is clearly evident in a play in which Falstaff figures heavily.

Sir John's first entrance in *II Henry IV* sets up a medical context. Coming from his physician, the first line that he utters refers to a recent medical inspection of his bodily fluids: 'Sirrah, you giant, what says the Doctor to my water?' (I.ii. 1). In a subsequent exchange with the Justice, Falstaff attributes a (feigned) deafness to 'much grief, from study and perturbation of the brain', which diagnosis he admits is derived from Galenic authority as he accedes: 'I have read the cause of

his effects in Galen' (I.ii. 91 - 2). Towards the end of *II Henry IV* (and only 153 lines before the character ends his dramatic 'life')²⁴ a bizarre premonitory cry is even articulated in which Falstaff strangely wails 'My womb, my womb, my womb, undoes me. -' (*II Hen IV* IV.i. 373); it is a comment that conjoins the character's biological and dramaturgical redundancies because, scientifically speaking, by the end of *II Henry IV*, Falstaff was already a man of the past. Dramaturgically, too, once Hal has been crowned King there will be no need for this surrogate mother/father figure: as the heir apparent attains regal perfection and progresses towards his own heterosexual union with the 'fair Katherine of France', ties with the homo-erotic tavern world are broken, youthful playmates (such as Poins) are rejected, and the erastes/eromenos relationship with Falstaff is abandoned.²⁵

The physical desires and homo-erotic agency that is exhibited by Falstaff could only really exist (and only then at a push) in the gender-bending world of 1590s comedy, or in the Rabelaisian world of festive revelry that constitutes the Boar's Head Tavern, Eastcheap. Falstaff claims to live in a constant state of fluidity and has been interpreted as androgynous flux; yet, I would argue that precisely *because* his masculinity is proposed as a weakly constructed performance (reliant upon desperate maintenance of sufficient heat to remain anatomically male), by 1600, such an example of liquefied sex-identity was living on borrowed time. At the turn of the seventeenth century, Falstaff could no longer hold anatomical credence with his audiences, and even the promise that he will return in *Henry V* during the epilogue to *II Henry IV* (spoken by a dancer who was perhaps Kemp himself) therefore seems to acknowledge the terminally liminal nature of this character:

{...} If you be not too
much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will
continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make
you merry with fair Katharine of France: where, for
any thing I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat,
unless already a' be killed with your hard
opinions [...]

(*II Henry IV* Epilogue)

Falstaff does not, of course, re-appear in *Henry V*. His audience learn instead that this 'androgynous monster' has fizzled out. Without his making an appearance, the hostess informs her spectators that Falstaff's much striven for phallic heat has finally departed:

a' bade me lay more clothes on his feet: I put my
hand into the bed and felt them, and they were as
cold as any stone; then I felt to his knees, and
they were as cold as any stone, and so upward and
upward, and *all* was as cold as any stone.

(*Henry V* II.iii. 21 – 25)

As the her hands travel suggestively 'upward and upward', the Hostess, like her audience, knows the last place to look for life in Falstaff; but his genitalia, too, have turned cold as this strange creation disappears from the stage.

What I want to argue here is that Falstaff's constant drinking (and his fevered attempts to sustain heat) are, at best, an ironic commentary upon the impossible 'anxieties' about the possibility of males 'degenerating' into the female form as they were articulated in anti-theatrical fears of 'dissolution'. As Peter Brown has observed, such apprehensions belong more to the gender policing of antiquity than they do the early-seventeenth century; the fear that:

lack of heat from childhood on could cause the male body to collapse back into a state of primary undifferentiation. No normal man might actually become a woman; but each man trembled forever on the brink of becoming "womanish." His flickering heat was an uncertain force. If it was to remain effective, its momentum had to be consciously maintained. It was never enough to be male: a man had to strive to remain "virile." He had to learn to exclude from his character and from the poise and temper of his body all telltale traces of 'softness' that might betray, in him, the half formed state of woman [...] ²⁶

was one that belonged to the distant past, not the early-modern period. So why did Shakespeare create such a humorous exemplar of such out-moded anatomical humours? Is it because he recognised the possibilities for its in-built homo-erotic preoccupations, or the incessant fascination with the masculine form that it implied? As Peter Brown has also observed of the earliest 'one-sex' model:

The small town notables of the second century watched each other with hard, clear eyes. They noted a man's walk. They reacted to the rhythms of his speech. They listened attentively to the telltale resonance of his voice. Any of these might betray the ominous loss of a hot, high spirited momentum [...] ²⁷

Maintaining heat is essential to Falstaff's masculinity, for sure, but Shakespeare's constant insistence on both Falstaff's own (and others') virility also serves another function. It repeatedly focuses audience attention on idealised (and phallogentric) notions of the superlative male stage-body.

In a speech following the aborted battle of Gaultree (*II Hen IV* IV.i. 435 ff.), for example, Sir John articulates a text-book *microcosmographia* in which the 'overcool [...] blood' (440) and 'male green sickness' (441 - 2) of John of Lancaster is mocked (and green sickness was a common name for chlorosis, the form of anaemia characteristic of girls at puberty that I have earlier in this chapter argued to have afflicted Ide when she realised that she could not inseminate Olive). Falstaff also supports the notion that foetuses were sexed according to the sexual potency of males during copulation (the theory articulated in Galen and up to the Renaissance anatomist Gemnius) and uses it to undermine the masculinity and phallic prowess of the King himself. Falstaff claims to despise lily-livered, lacklustre men: 'when they marry, they get wenches' (442), he observes, and (in a contrast that is achieved by the quantity of sherris-sack that he himself imbibes) he repeatedly attempts to achieve a 'warming of the blood, which before, cold and settled, left the liver white and pale' (451 - 53). Falstaff personifies, as he actively delineates, the medieval humanist conception of the body of man, in which 'little kingdom' (457) the heat of sherry is a beacon in the face that calls the 'vital commoners and inland petty spirits [...] to their captain, the heart' (457 - 9), but, crucially, this heart is at its most admirable when phallically tumescent, when it

is engorged with blood or 'great and puffed up' (459) as Falstaff puts it. Hal is therefore described as having inherited 'cold blood' from his father that is said to have been 'like lean, sterile and bare land' (465 - 6) and it is only due to immersion in the homo-social and homo-erotic world of the tavern and the virile influence and education of Falstaff (and its concomitant drinking bouts) that Hal has himself now 'become very hot and valiant' (469).

An equation of heat with virility (and a rejection of the feminine when aroused) is also articulated in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Following ejection from Mistress Page's wicker-basket and immersion in the swirling waters of the Thames, Falstaff pleads to Bardolph: 'let me pour some sack into the Thames water, for my belly's as cold as if I had swallowed snowballs for pills to cool the reins [...]' (*Merry Wives* III. v. 19 - 21), a line which, once again, reveals a need to maintain a high body-temperature that exists in direct relation to the potency of Falstaff's sexual organs.²⁸ When Bardolph offers to put eggs into Falstaff's second batch of sack, however, Sir John shrinks for fear of 'contaminating' his virile potion with feminine reproductive substances, and retorts: 'simple of itself. I'll no pullet-sperm in my brewage' (a line which also significantly and incontrovertibly connects female 'sperm' with eggs) (III.V. 29 - 30).

Falstaff's fear of anatomical flux is further reinforced in a speech to Page (who is at this moment disguised as Brook) in which the same basket story is outlined, and in which Falstaff urges:

Think of that, a man of my kidney - think of that - that am subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw. It was a miracle to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames and, cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horseshoe. Think of that - hissing hot - think of that, Master Brook!

(III.V. 105 - 112)

The play on 'Dutch dish' here is complex. Most editions gloss: "The Dutch were proverbially addicted to butter"; however, Falstaff is 'stewed' in it (the stews being brothels); moreover, Tourneur associates heightened sexual practices with Dutch men's supposed addiction to drink ('Dutch Lust! Fulsome lust! Drunken procreation!' (*The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1606 - 7 I. III. 67)) and the term 'dish' itself was frequently used in the Renaissance to indicate a sexually active or attractive person.²⁹ Falstaff is, therefore, taken here in a moment of anatomical fluidity - yet he is metaphorically forged into a highly-charged and sexually-rampant male figure by the Thames' cooling waters.

The character, time and time again, appears to exemplify a paradigmatic adherence to the kind of corporal philosophy that puts him in danger of 'dissolving' into muliebrity. His vocabulary, like that of Gosson, Stubbes and Prynne, is one of disintegration, mellifluence and thaw. Falstaff's body regularly has differing degrees of viscosity attributed to it: it is ready to be poured from one mould to another, like 'a wassail candle [it is] all tallow' (*II Hen IV* I.ii. 125), he is 'gravy, gravy, gravy' (I.ii. 129), 'molten lead' (*I Hen IV* V.iii. 33) and the ubiquitously instanced dishes of 'grease' and 'butter.' Incredibly, too, Falstaff is able to melt into spaces smaller than his vast physical size and

consequently looks to secrete himself in any 'kiln hole, press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, [or] vault' (*Merry Wives* IV.ii. 51 -2).

Linguistically, too, he metamorphoses in gender as often as he does size and shape. When similes are employed to describe him, they set up analogies with either female or neuter sexes. Falstaff thus claims to be 'as melancholy as a gib [which is a castrated male] cat' (*I Henry IV* I.ii. 69 - 70) and bemoans: 'if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then I am a shotten herring' (and the reference here is to a *female* fish that has spawned its roe and is thus especially thin and emaciated).³⁰ Even his naked body clothes Falstaff in apparel that is unsuitable to the virile sex and therefore connects him to the feminine: an ironic reference to his emaciated form therefore prompts the complaint: 'my skin hangs about me like an old Lady's loose gown' (III.iii. 2 - 3). In addition, he is not infrequently described as cold and dry, the archetypal *female* humours of Galenic anatomy, and Page mocks him as 'Old, cold, withered' (*Merry Wives* V.v. 153), Hal, likewise, refers to Falstaff as a 'withered elder' (*II Hen IV*. II. iv. 211) and Falstaff himself claims that he is 'withered like an old apple-john [...] a peppercorn [...] the inside of a church' (*I Hen IV*. III.iii. 4 ff.).

There is even sustained imagery that links Falstaff to the hermaphrodite 'earth-man' of Christian myth (or the feminised earth of Plato's *Symposium*). When Evans — who is not by chance at this moment located in a scenographic representation of a garden and situated under a tree — alerts his audience to Falstaff, he cries: 'But stay! I smell a man of middle earth!' (*Merry Wives* V.v. 79), lines which unavoidably call up the transitory state in which, the Geneva Bible informed its readers, man rested between his creation and the subsequent division of the sexes into male and female. For on the sixth day:

[...] God said, Let vs make man in our^t Image according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the foule of the heaven, and over the beastes, and over all the earth, and over everything that creepeth and moueth on the earth.

Thus God created the mā in his image: in the image of God created he him: he created them* male and female.³¹

^t This image & likeness of God in man is expounded, Ephe. 4.24. where it is writte, that man was created after God in righteousnes and true holines, meaning by the two wordes all perfection, all wisdom, trueth, innocencie, power & c.

A single androgen being, created in the image of God which was, like Falstaff, composed of earth:

The Lord God [...] made the man^e of the dust of the ground, and breathed in his face breath of life, and the man was a living soule.³²

^e He sheweth whereof mans body was created, to the intent that man should not glory in the excellencie of his owne nature.

A creature that retained its perfect androgynous form until its creator eventually divided it into two discrete sexes:

Also the Lord God said, It is not good that the man shoulde be him selfe alone: I will make him an helpe^r meete for him.³³

Therefore the Lord God caused an heauie sleepe to fal vpon the man: and whiles he slept, he tooke one of his ribbes and closed vp the flesh in steade thereof.

And the ribbe wich the Lord God had taken from the man, *made he a^o woman, and brought her to the man. Then the man said. *This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shal-be called *woman, because she was taken out of man.

*Therefore shall man leave *his father and his mother, & shal cleave to his wife, and they shalbe [sic] one flesh.³⁴

^o Signifying, mankinde was perfite, when the woman was created, which before was like an unperfit building.

Falstaff echoes this image of the 'earth-man androgen' later himself when he describes his neutrally-sexed page boy as a 'foolish, compounded clay man' (*II Hen IV* I.ii. 5). Famously also, he is at pains to point out that — like his 'androgynous' Queen — he labours under the moon, the celestial body that Aristophanes had informed the *Symposium*'s audience was linked directly to hermaphroditism:

Now the reason why there were three sexes, and of such description, was this. The male originally was the offspring of the Sun; the female, offspring of the Earth; the one that shared in both these, offspring of the Moon, because the Moon in turn partakes of Sun and Earth.³⁵

The greatest instance of Falstaff's sexual flux, however, comes during *The Merry Wives of Windsor* when he 'gives most delight' and 'dissolves himself into a woman' in an exemplary Prynian sense.³⁶ The play contains a scene (IV.ii.) in which Falstaff is disguised as Mistress Ford's maid's aunt — the fat woman of Brentford — and in which (once this malleable gender-puppet has been dressed: 'Let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford [...] (IV.ii. 87 - 88)) an MTF cross-dressed Falstaff is perceived by Ford, Evans, Slender, the Host, Simple, an unseen 'knave constable' and (presumably from their silence) Shallow, Caius and Page as the woman into whom he has quite literally 'transformed.' Falstaff's response to the incident reveals his own profound fears that the 'performance' was so exact that theatrical transformation will contaminate him, and lead on to an irreversible corporal dissolution:

If it should come to
the ear of the court how I have been transformed, and
how my transformation hath been washed and cudgelled,
they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop
and liquor fisherman's boots with me [...]

(IV.v. 88 - 92)

Well, this is all convincing stuff, but I'll stop on this tack here because most of these arguments, indeed pretty much the entire reading of Falstaff that I have thus far constructed (that of a sex-shifting gender-marionette based on anti-theatrical rhetoric) would seem to miss another, and more obvious, point entirely. It is therefore time to put a match to this straw man; because undercutting *all of this* reading is the fact that the Falstaff trilogy takes place in an overtly homo-social and homo-erotic world. One that thrives on *behavioural* fluidities and shifts between

hetero- and homo-sexualities rather than corporal mutations from one *anatomical* sex-identity to another.

As if hammering home the physical truth concerning the 'bodies beneath' all of the female costumes on the early modern English stage, the radical conclusion for Caius in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is that he marries a boy; Slender nearly does the same.³⁷ In general, the homo-erotic significance of these plays is as intoxicating as the sack that is guzzled within them — and it is *Falstaff* himself who most consistently and passionately articulates the potent strength of masculine love and male bonding as it is developed by Shakespeare within the world of Mistress Quickly's tavern.

Sir John declares of his companion, Poins, that 'he has given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hanged. It could not be else — I have drunk medicines' (*I Henry IV* II.ii. 17 - 19). The Hostess (who is herself a multi-valent object of sexual desire) has the homo-erotic implications of the male body beneath 'her' costume regularly pointed out to audiences: s/he is frequently referred to as both a 'thing' and an 'otter' (and the otter is, of course, an animal that is not only poised between species — and thus accurately described by Falstaff as: 'neither fish nor flesh' — but one that also happens to be anatomically androgynous). Importantly though, once set up, the conclusions that are drawn from this ambiguity for Mistress Quickly consistently err on the side of the homo-erotic: the observation that 'a man knows not where to have her', for example, playing on a metatheatrical confusion over seeking vaginal penetration with the character but of finding only the possibility of anal with the actor. Serving boys also have their 'androgyny' played upon in order to legitimise their sexual availability; and thus only five lines after Falstaff's page has been introduced as a 'compounded clay-man' he is set up in a sub-text of phallic penetration and prostitution. Called a 'whoreson mandrake' (*II Hen IV* I.ii.10), the boy is simultaneously rendered the offspring of prostituted sexual activity *and* the distinctly phallic aphrodisiac that prompts men on to libidinous activity.

Falstaff's appetite is certainly never confined to female characters (despite the homo-erotic phenomenality of their transvestite theatricality), and we therefore hear from the Hostess that whilst he:

stabbed me in mine own
house, most beastly in good faith [...]

it is quickly added:

A cares not what mischief he does:
if his weapon be out, he will foin like any devil he will spare neither
man, woman, nor child' [...]

(*II Hen IV* II.i. 10 - 13)

In an admission of his companion, Bardolph, that 'I bought him in Paul's' (I.ii.39), Falstaff also hints at a knowledge of the locations in which homosexual services could be purchased (for the cathedral precinct of St. Paul's was, if we are to believe the Visitation Report of Bishop Bancroft

In 1598 – precisely the date when these plays were written – the location for many illicit services, including male prostitution). Whilst the wives of bell-ringers Reginald Chunnell and Robert Parker had in that year frequently been observed to:

sett or stand openlie in the south yle off[...] the[...] Churche dailie to take everie manns money for goinge up into the Steple, by reason whereof there is great suspicio: w^{ch} is not oelie a greate discredit to y^e younge women, but also a scandall to the churche, Consideringe they be not y^e best sorte of people that travaile that waie [...] ³⁸

the solicitation of sexual services was not exclusively from females and, in 1619, the author I.H. famously observed of one whore: 'Faine would she have beene a *Quorster* at *Paul's*, but that she loves not to stand in a Surplesse: yet many times she repayers thither, especially unto the *lower end of the Middle Ile*'. Such references to the sexual solicitations of choristers and chorister actors (and the precise locations in Paul's precinct in which they were undertaken) have been the subject of much recent critical debate.³⁹

Playing on his 'androgynous' status in another bawdy exchange, the Hostess actor reveals: '[Falstaff] hath put all my substance in to/ that fat belly of his; but I will have some of it out again, or I will ride/ [him] a nights like the mare.' (*II Hen IV* II.I. 57 - 9). Exactly what 'substance' of the physically ambiguous Hostess has been so copiously swallowed by Sir John is unclear (but there are direct references to fellatio in another raucously bawdy scene in which Pistoll is urged to 'discharge' his 'two bullets' 'upon mine hostess' despite her protestation: 'I'll drink no proofs, nor no bullets; Ill drink no more / than will do me good for no man's pleasure, I.' (*II.IV.* 90 - 94)). The homo-erotic implications of such comments are further augmented as Falstaff ignores the possibility of [night]mares and chooses instead to wring the bawdy dry with: 'I think I am as like to ride the mare, if I have any vantage / of ground to get up' (60- 61). An undoubtedly sexual joke (the image created being of one 'beast' mounting another from behind) yet, combined with its talk of 'getting something up' and the reality that the audience all know the one place to penetrate the 'otter' Hostess, the homosexual implications are strong – and especially when set aside the fact that 'riding the mare' was a popular and well known (*boys*) game (it was a variant of leapfrog in which one boy mounted another's 'mare' and perilously 'rode' him).⁴⁰ Falstaff in fact even claims that Hal: 'rides the wild mare with the boys, and / jumps upon joint stools' (*II.IV.* 202 - 3) in a context that also reveals the price of such activities. The penetrated is rendered as guilty as the penetrator, and Falstaff informs the Hostess:

Falstaff. If the cook help to make gluttony, you help to make the diseases, Doll; we catch of you, Doll, we catch of you. Grant that, my poor virtue, grant that.

Which, despite the hostess trying to read as referring to the theft of trinkets:

Doll. Yea, joy, our chains and our jewels [...]

Falstaff brings straight back to the scabs and pustules of sexually transmitted diseases:

Falstaff. Your brooches, pearls and ouches - for to serve bravely is

to come halting off, you know, to come off the breach with
his pike bent bravely; and to surgery bravely, to venture
upon the charged chambers bravely –

The reference is obviously a 'sore point' for Doll (perhaps her 'jewels' – or testicles – are not in the best of shape). She can take no more, and urges him:

Doll. Hang yourself, you muddy conger, hang yourself.

The conger was a familiar phallic metaphor, but for how long did audiences speculate on the reason for its being 'muddy'?

Riding, jumping, pricking (all metaphors for phallic penetration) are ubiquitous in the Falstaff trilogy. After referring to Sir John as 'a good backsword man' (*II Hen IV* III.ii. 52), Shallow, perhaps ironically, demands of the servant Falstaff bought at Paul's (whom the Justice thinks has a 'good hand' and flirtatiously informs 'you like well and bear your years very well' (*II Hen IV* III.ii. 68 - 69)): 'May I know how the lady [Falstaff's] wife doth?' A question to which Bardolph replies: 'Sir, pardon, a soldier is better accommodated than with a wife' (*II Hen IV* III.ii. 54 - 55). Another innocent phrase? Well, perhaps; but one to which the response is clearly homo-erotic, for Shallow responds:

It is well said, in faith, sir, and it is well said indeed too: 'better accommodated'! It is good, yea indeed is it. Good phrases are surely, and ever were, very commendable. 'Accommodated': it comes of Accommo. Very good, a good phrase.

(*II Hen IV* III.ii. 56 - 9)

Shallow cites the first person present tense of the Latin infinitive: *accomodare* (because it is the etymological source of Bardolph's English verb); but given that the principal definitions of *accomodare* are: (i) to fit and (ii) to make comfortable, Shallow's excitement may also be seen to arise from an interpretation of Bardolph's words as meaning that this soldier has a better and more comfortable 'fit' than with a wife — a comment that Shallow's accurate Latin grammar immediately brings straight back to the first person: *accomodo* or "I fit". Innocent enough in itself? Well, maybe; but given the fact that the lines act as a precursor to the famous conscription scene (III.ii. 75 ff.) in which Falstaff and Shallow fall over themselves in their desires to 'prick' (or mark out) a list of increasingly effeminised male conscripts (the verb is used eleven times in only fifty-eight lines) it forms an extraordinarily interesting coincidence.⁴¹

At around line 125 (& ff) of the conscription scene, the homo-erotic bawdy reaches boiling point in discussion of the case of Feeble, the woman's tailor. Tailors had a general reputation for cowardice and effeminacy and this, together with obvious puns on 'tail' (penis) and 'tailor' (user of the penis), enables the following exchange:

Shallow. Shall I prick him, sir?

Falstaff. You may, but if he had been a man's tailor, he'd ha' pricked you [...]
Prick the woman's tailor well, Master Shallow, deep, Master Shallow.

(*II Hen IV III.ii. 127 - 35*)

Here and elsewhere, seeming to present a quest for virile heterosexual certainty, Falstaff, in fact, represents a homo-erotic 'spin' on events at almost every turn. His corporal attentions, when not aimed principally at himself, are for the young King-in-waiting. When the object of his desire moves into a new phase of political authority and assumes the heterosexual persona that is required in order to perpetuate his royal dynasty, Sir John Falstaff finally leaves the stage. As he does so, there is only one character left whose mourning seems deeper than surface custom. Neglected by Harry Monmouth, the only man who truly grieves when death parts him from his master, is Bardolph, the boy he bought at Paul's, who pleads:

Would I were with him, wheresoe'er he is, either in
heaven or in hell!

(*Henry V II. iii 6 - 8*)

It is, I would argue, one of the most touching moments of loyalty, love and affection in Shakespeare.

Notes to Chapter II:

¹ The series of epic poems that make up *Huon de Bordeaux* (first published in France in 1260) take the classic form of the thirteenth-century *chanson de geste*. For the main part, they follow the romantic figure of Huon and the poem's thematic plot has therefore been said to reflect the opposition of the aristocracy to Louis IX (because its hero is the victim of an injustice by Charlemagne, who manipulates evidence in order to prove him guilty of a crime that he has not committed – with the hero subsequently embarking on a series of adventures in which he is aided by the magician Auberon).

The best discussion of the poem as a whole is to be found in Marguerite Rossl, *Huon de Bordeaux et l'Évolution du genre épique au XIII^e siècle* (Paris: H. Champion, 1975).

² Sir John Bouchier, the second Baron Berners, (1467 - 1533) was a prolific statesman, translator and author. He served in the foreign armies of Henry VII, and acted in the suppression of the Cornish rebellion that was led by Perkin Warbeck; he was later also shown much favour by Henry VIII during the early years of the King's reign. Berners was also a well established literary figure, however, and published a renowned two-volume translation of Froissart's *Chronicles*, in 1523 and 1525. As well as *The Boke of Huon of Bordeaux*, Berners translated a series of chivalric romances from French (and Spanish) into English. These included influential editions of Diego de San Pedro's *The Castell of Love* and Antonio Guevara's *El relox de Principes* (under the title *The Golden Boke of Marcus Aurelius, Emperour and Eloquent Oratour*).

³ Sir John Bouchier [Lord Berners], *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeux* (Wynkyn de Worde, 1534), edited by Sidney Lee (London: Trübner & Co., 1882 - 1887) (2 vols.) [E.E.T.S. (series 2) vol. 40.]. Vol. 2, p. 692. Hereafter *Huon* in the main body of the text.

The relevant sections of the story of Princess Ide are cited in detail as Appendix IV to this dissertation: 'Selections from *The Boke of Duke Huon of Burdeux*'.

⁴ The text gives 'almayne' (probably from the Latin *Allemania* - the country of the *Allemanni*) the word was common in English from the 14th until the 18th centuries and is certainly unsurprising in this context, given Berners' French source material and his occasional habit of anglicising foreign words.

⁵ The best account of the speech-acts that are playfully toyed with in the section of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* to which I refer is to be found in Susanne Wofford, "To You I Give Myself, For I Am Yours" Erotic Performance and Theatrical Performatives in *As You Like It*, in *Shakespeare Reread*, edited by Russ Macdonald (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 147 - 69.

⁶ See pp. 119 - 120 of this dissertation

⁷ See Reavley Gair, *The Children of Paul's: the Story of a Theatre Company: 1553 - 1608* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 184 (appendix 2 'Personalia').

See also John Lyly, *Gallathea and Midas*, edited by Anne Begor Lancashire (Lincoln Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), Introduction, pp. xi - xi.

All subsequent quotations from Lyly's *Gallathea* refer to this edition.

⁸ Perhaps Lyly's choice of the pastoral as a *genre* carries in itself a coded homo-erotic message.

As Gregory W. Bredbeck has pointed out in his *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), especially pp. 201 - 13, there was a 'peculiar and expected presence of homo-eroticism in the [pastoral] genre' (p. 203). Homo-eroticism is also a feature that Bredbeck argues to be clearly evident in Theocritus' *Idylls*, Virgil's *Eclogues*, Barnfield's *The Affectionate Shepherd* and Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*.

⁹ See Theodora A. Jankowski "Where there can be no cause of affection": redefining virgins, their desires, and their pleasures in John Lyly's *Gallathea*, in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, edited by Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 253 - 274. See also Phyllis Rackin, 'Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage', *PMLA* 102:1 (January, 1987), pp. 29 - 41.

¹⁰ From the age-based disrespect of the Mariner (who dismisses Rafe, Dick and Robin with: 'You be but boys' (I.iv. 34)) through to the insistent ownership of youths that is articulated by the Alchemist (a character who ubiquitously uses the possessive adjective 'my' in relation to his apprentices – even *after* they have left his service (see III.iii. 1 & ff.)) a notion of dominance, ownership and control of adolescent males – together with expectations of labour enforced by their older male masters – is consistently intimated in this text.

It is, of course, also interesting to speculate as to whether a notion of adolescent acquiescence and servitude might be linked (on a meta-theatrical level at least) to the life of chorister-actors themselves. Concerning Paul's Children, Alfred Harbage has famously observed: 'The lot of the mildly disciplined modern choirboy gives us no notion of that of the Renaissance chapel child [who was] divorced from his parents, huddled up in lodgings, and worked to what must have been the limit of physical endurance.' See Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 32.

In addition, Feuillerat provides insight into the excessive demands that were sometimes put on choristers, in order that they might entertain their coterie audiences. After the festivities at Hampton Court (at which the Chapel Children played on Ash Wednesday in 1574) for example, an entry in the Revels Accounts details a payment made 'To Thomas Totnall, for fire & victuals for the children when they landed, some of them being sick & cold & hungry.' See Albert Feuillerat, *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels at Court in the Time of Queen Elizabeth*, *Materialien zur Kunde des ältern englischen Dramas*, Vol. XXI (Louvain : A. Uystpruyst, 1908), p. 219.

After citing this example as a case in point, Harbage goes on to observe: '[...] the fact remains that the choristers were unpaid and exactly drilled child labourers. They were selected in the first place for beauty and musical talent, and were expected to wear a revels garment as gracefully as a surplice' (Harbage, *Traditions*, p. 32). He finally concludes that 'The actor in the coterie theatre was little more than a chattel and not, as in the popular theatre, the very keystone of the structure; therefore little need be said of his social relationships and destiny' (Harbage, *Traditions*, p. 33).

¹¹ The word 'lad' appears a further five times in the 1592 quarto and, if the songs that appear in the edition of 1626 are included, the total number of 'boys' or 'lads' in this text rises to fifty-six. A copy of the 1626 edition of *Gallathea* is available in John, Lyly, *Six Court Comedies* [...], collected by Edward Blount (London: W. Stansby for E. Blount, 1626).

¹² The most obvious source for the cross-dressing, lesbian love and sexual transformation plot in Lyly's *Gallathea* may be found in Ovid's story of Iphis and Ianthe; in which the god Isis advises Telethusa to disguise her new-born daughter (Iphis) as a boy so that she might escape being exposed to the elements on a mountainside and therefore die at the behest of her father, Ledges (see *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, translated by David R. Slavic (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), book ix., lines 666 - 797).

At thirteen, however, the disguised 'boy' Iphis had a bride (Ianthe) chosen for 'him' by Ledges and the two girls 'loved each other at once [...] and although] Iphis knew there were problems [she] wanted nevertheless / what she understood was hopeless — and loved with all the more ardour' (*Metamorphoses* ix. 720 - 4). Iphis, after praying with her mother before the altar of Isis, was transformed into a male (*Metamorphosis* ix. 759 - 785) so that 'the handsome, grateful bridegroom' might marry 'his lovely bride' (ix. 797).

It should of course therefore be noted that there are *three* significant *discrepancies* between the Ovidian and Lylian narratives:

- (i) In the *Metamorphoses*, there is no evidence that *both* the girls are dressed as boys (or any inclination of a motive for it)
- (ii) there is *no* notion at all in the *Metamorphoses* that Ianthe *suspects* Iphis of being a woman and
- (iii) Ovid achieves a heterosexual conclusion *within* his narrative structure (by means of the divinely orchestrated sex-change in which Iphis is rendered male in book ix, line 785).

¹³ See Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, *The Child Actors: A Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), and Reavley Gair, *The Children of Paul's: the story of a theatre company 1553 - 1608* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) and an unpublished MS by Pamela Brown entitled 'Boys Will Be Girls: John Lyly's *Gallathea*' (a paper given to the MLA Annual Conference in 1993). The evidence from Gair will be more fully discussed below in relation to Falstaff (see notes 37 and 38 to this chapter).

¹⁴ The *dramatis personae* of *Gallathea* calls for a 'populous' (in IV.i.). Since only two extra bodies are needed for the speaking parts that emerge from this 'populous', however, I am cautiously attributing only two additional characters within this group and, therefore, presuming that there are a total of twelve mortals (other than Gallathea and Phyllida) in the play.

¹⁵ See Janowski, *Cause of Affection*, pp. 264 - 5.

¹⁶ The Rosalind / Ganymede actor in the Epilogue to Shakespeare's *As You Like It* also overtly denies 'his' femininity and states (using the second conditional) 'Were I a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not [...]'.

¹⁷ As Gair and others have noted, the real 'business' of running boys companies was *not* the court performances that they gave (which was the the legitimising *legal* reason for their existence), but rather the habit of charging admission to the 'rehearsals' for court performances – at which members of the public paid handsomely for their seats.

¹⁸ The point of Hebe's name connecting her to this myth is made in Rackin, *Androgyny*, p. 36.

¹⁹ Grace Tiffany, *Erotic Beasts and Social Monsters: Shakespeare, Jonson, and Comic Androgyny* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), p. 136.

²⁰ Both instances of italicisation are my own.

Giorgio Melchiori has observed of this difference that, in the first quarto, 'humorous' simply means 'witty', 'amusing', 'in a particular mood' whereas in the second 'humours' is short for 'character', 'human type'. He also cites Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* as being performed between the publication of these two Shakespearean quartos (and draws attention to the fact that Shakespeare was in the cast), therefore implying that *Part Two* may be linked to a 'new comedy of humours [that was] born at the end of the sixteenth century' (William Shakespeare, *The Second Part of King Henry IV*, edited by Giorgio Melchiori (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Introduction, pp. 17 – 18).

²¹ I believe that, given its medical context, the name Caius in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is (perhaps) a reference to John Caius (1510 -70), the physician who re-founded Gonville and Caius College (Cambridge) and shaped it into the most reputed medical school in England (as will be discussed in Chapter V, Gonville and Caius was the college at which the physician and anatomist William Harvey later attended).

²² Aesculapius was the Roman god of medicine. The Latin name that is used by Shakespeare is thus a variant of the older Greek Ασκληπιος (or Asclepius).

Asclepius' medical authority was well respected until the advances in medicine that came in the early modern period. According to ancient myth, Asclepius was the offspring of Apollo (the Greek god of healing, truth and prophecy) and a nymph named Coronis. As a youth, he was trained in the craft of natural healing by the Centaur Chiron, but Zeus, who feared that he would discover the capacity to make mankind immortal, slew Asclepius with a thunderbolt.

The character is mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*, but only as an adroit physician, and it was not until much later that Asclepius was honoured as a hero. In due course he became worshipped as a god. The cult of Asclepius began in Thessaly, but swiftly proliferated throughout the Hellenic world. Largely due to the fact that Asclepius was presumed capable of treating the sick through magical dreams, the practice of sleeping in his temples became common in antiquity. In ancient iconography, he is generally presented standing, dressed in a long mantle and with a bare torso and almost ubiquitously carries a characteristic emblem: a staff with a snake coiled around it.

²³ T. W. Craik seems to take Evans to be a stock (or generic) Welshman and therefore postulates that this phrase 'might have run '... than is a puppy dog', as in Fluellen's similar criticism of MacMorris' ignorance of the Roman disciplines of war, *Henry V* 3.2.18.' See William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, edited by T.W. Craik (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 147 [a note to Act III. scene I. lines 61 – 2].

²⁴ Despite an explicit promise in the epilogue of *Part Two* that: 'our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it, and make you merry with fair Katherine of France [...]' Falstaff in actual fact only had 143 speaking lines after this 'womb' reference, before dropping out of Shakespearean drama altogether (because the character does *not* appear in *Henry V*).

²⁵ One model for the relationship between Falstaff and Hal (that of the traditional sexual and educational association in ancient Greek society between a noble youth (eromenos) and an older man of status (erastes)) is outlined in Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), especially p. 16 and p. 156 ff.

²⁶ Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1989), p. 10 – 11.

²⁷ Brown, *Body and Society*, p. 11.

²⁸ The word 'reins' (literally 'kidneys') was, of course, interchangeable with 'loins' in Renaissance English (as it still is in modern day French).

²⁹ See William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* (II. vi. 123) in which Antony 'will to his Egyptian dish'; and (V.ii. 273) in which the Clown reveals that 'woman is a dish for the gods, if the devil dress her not'.

Dekker uses the term 'dish' twice: In *The Honest Whore Part II* (III. III. 9), a bawd admits that the only girls he has are 'ordinary dishes'; again, in *Northward Ho!* (V.I. 228), Bellamont insists that he is no pander using the phrase 'I did not procure your husband this banqueting dish of sukket'.

³⁰ Falstaff's habit of comparing himself to 'thin or meagre fare from food shops' has been observed by David Bevington in a footnote to Act II. scene iv. line 124 of the play (see William Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part I* edited by David Bevington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 184, and introduction, pp. 28 - 9). The gendered nature (and reproductive significance) of this particular example are, however, both missed by Bevington.

³¹ *The Geneva Bible* (London: Christopher Barker, 1576) Genesis Chapter 1 verse 26 - 7.

³² *Ibid.*, Chapter 2 verse 7.

³³ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2 Verse 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2 verses 21 - 24.

³⁵ Plato, *Phæderus, Ion, Gorgias, and Symposium, with Passages from the Republic and Laws*, translated by Lane Cooper (New York, London & Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 236.

³⁶ See the quotation from William Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix* with which I began Chapter I of this dissertation.

³⁷ See IV.v. 181 - 205. Despite Caius being caught out by a trick-marriage here, it is still interesting to speculate on the validity of his nuptials; since there is - of course - a Biblical precedent for the veiled marriage trick: Jacob worked for seven years so that he might marry Rachel; but, because he was tricked by Laban, he ended up with Leah (who was Laban's eldest daughter). Crucially, Jacob was obliged to *remain married* to his first wife (see Genesis Chapter 29 verse 16 - 29).

³⁸ *The Visitation Report of Bishop Bancroft*, London Guildhall Library, MS. 9537/9. folio. 60^r (the passage is cited in Gair, *Children of Paul's*, p. 28).

³⁹ I.H. *The House of Correction, Certain Characters, called Par Parl* (London, 1619), sig. D2^v. The poem is also cited in Gair, *Children of Paul's*, p. 28.

Gair produces further (rather compelling) evidence for child prostitution amongst the chorister actor company at St. Paul's throughout this section of his study. Theodora Jankowski has, likewise, implied that there is good evidence that certain choirboys at St Paul's 'may even have solicited for sex, along with the other whores [who operated in the cathedral precinct].' In support of her thesis she cites fols. 3, 5 and 6 of an unpublished MS by Pamela Brown entitled 'Boys Will Be Girls: John Lyly's *Gallathea*' (a paper given to the MLA Annual Conference in 1993). See Jankowski, 'affection', p.273 (footnote 22). I have to date, however, been unable to obtain a copy of Brown's unpublished MS.

⁴⁰ See the footnote to Act II. scene I. line 58-9 of *The Second Part of King Henry IV*, edited by Georgio Melchiori (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 86.

⁴¹ The lines in question being act III. scene II. 91 - 149.

Chapter III:

***Hic Mulier*: Anatomy and Agency: the FTM Cross-Dressers of Early Modern London and their Challenge to Patriarchal Authority**

Now the women folk of England, who have mostly blue-grey eyes and are fair and pretty, have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes, and the men must put up with such ways, and may not punish them for it, indeed the good wives often beat their men, and if this is discovered, the nearest neighbour is placed on a cart and paraded through the whole town as a laughing-stock for the victim as a punishment – he is informed – for not having come to his neighbour's assistance when his wife was beating him.¹

Thomas Platter, a young tourist
visiting England from Basle, 1599.

Is the next *Mad-man*, I would have you take view of in this *Bedlam*. The *proud man*? or rather the *proud woman*; or rather *hæc aquita*, both he and shee. For if they had no more evident distinction of sexe, then they have of shape they would be all man or rather all woman: for the *Amazons* beare away the Bell as one wittily, *Hic Mulier* will shortly be good latine, if this transmigration hold: For whether on horseback or on foot, there is no great difference: but not discernible out of a coach.²

Thomas Adams, Vicar of Wengrave, Buckinghamshire,
Chaplain to Sir Henry Montague, Lord Chief Justice of England,
and Preacher at St Paul's Cross and Whitehall, 1615.

I

In my first two chapters I have attempted to outline the development of a 'two-sex' system of anatomical differentiation, and looked at some of the implications of such a model on the (principally male orientated) homo-erotics that were involved in the representations of androgyny and sexual transformation on the early modern English stage. In the following two chapters of this dissertation, I am going to change direction slightly — because I now intend to turn to some of the implications of an emergent 'two-sex' anatomical model for the *real* female bodies that inhabited early modern London, and then to consider their representation in dramatic literature. My present chapter will therefore concern itself with the rise in female cross-dressing that took place during the early years of the seventeenth century (and will attempt to outline some of the significances of the rise in experimental anatomy set against the ways in which elite and upper-middle-class women began to articulate their right to increased sociological and sexual freedoms). After a brief survey of sumptuary legislation, then, the primary aim of this

chapter is an assessment of the impact of 'two-sex' anatomical paradigms on the manifestations of female agency that are evident in elite cultural forms such as the court masque and on the *hic mulier* phenomenon of FTM cross-dressing in early seventeenth-century London.

In the historical progression from late-medieval, through Tudor and into early-Stuart society, it is clear that the question of apparel took on increasing significance, both in the visual codification of class and in the categorisation of gender. The fact that dress-codes were of mounting concern to the body politic during the reign of Elizabeth I is amply evidenced by the superfluity of sumptuary legislation that was passed by her various administrations and the concomitant publication of tabulated regulations, explaining the suitability of certain cuts, fabrics and furs to particular social groups.³ What is extraordinary, then, – given the obsessive misgivings that were exhibited by the Elizabethan oligarchy towards misappropriations of certain elite styles of clothing by the 'middling sort' – is the fact that such relatively straightforward, class-centred, regulation did not lead on to an equivalent degree of legislation aimed at *gender*-specific sumptuary transgression during the reign of King James (despite fervent polemical deliberations over the suitability of certain items of apparel for each sex). Whilst the Elizabethan era saw an attempted knee-jerk reaction from the aristocracy towards the middle-classes as a result of their mis-use of sumptuous clothing, the Jacobean age – for some reason, and in direct contrast, – saw a much more ambivalent attitude towards the (predominantly bourgeois and upper-class) women who sought to liberate themselves from the confines of their sex through an appropriation of certain elements of masculine attire.⁴

The female transvestite's disruption of a supposedly 'natural' social and sexual order was regularly inveighed against in sermons and polemical literature but, in the harsh reality of *law*, the manifestations of cross-dressing that are alluded to in pamphlets (such as *Hic Mulier*, *Haec Vir*, *Mulde Sacke* and a range of others) seem to have attracted few instances of direct prosecution, and – remarkably – no legislative framework appears to have been drawn-up specifically in order to prohibit her actions.⁵ The first question that a historian of early modern culture might well pose, then, is as to whether a successful series of sartorial challenges to status and authority (as embodied in middle-class usurpations of noble apparel during the sixteenth century) was taken as a paradigm for new *sexual* emancipation by a generation of anatomically liberated women who were keen to assert their autonomy and independence in the early years of the seventeenth century. Did there exist in early-Jacobean London – as Alison Findlay has recently suggested – a class of women who 'pleased themselves' and quite literally 'fashioned' their lives outside the controlling limits of patriarchal constraint in order to dress and act as they wished?⁶ Moreover, *why* were official reactions to such figures so muted?

The consensus of historical opinion has it that the rise of a wealthy (and therefore influential) mercantile class in the Tudor years had created – perhaps for the first time in English society – a large body of individuals who would have previously been regarded as 'lower-class' but who had

abruptly acquired both influence and social standing due almost entirely to their industry. Sartorial conventions and sumptuary regulation had, until the mid-sixteenth century, been largely drawn up and invoked in order to observe semiotic codifications of class and rank (and not to make manifest demarcations of wealth). As a new body of middle-class lawyers, scholars and merchants began to rise in the cities (and above all in London), however, a considerable section of middle-class society sought to exploit its newly gained wealth in order to purchase the fine clothes that were typically worn by their social superiors – and a situation arose in which “elite prerogatives to sumptuous dress were undercut by new wealth, destabilising a seemingly natural association between the display of wealth and elite status.”⁷

The middle-classes' occasional lack of knowledge *vis-à-vis* the significance of a particular colour, emblem or cut was, of course, abundantly satirised in the literature of the period.⁸ Yet, despite the fact that certain social-climbers may well have lacked the *sprezzatura* necessary to sport the fine clothes of the aristocracy with grace and nobility, the middle-classes certainly did – in the main – understand the social benefits of wearing elite apparel (and consequently sought to maximise the public display of status that such choice attire could afford).⁹ Current scholarly opinion considers that, by raising onlookers' perceptions of their social class, these figures hoped for a *de facto* revision of their position in society – that ‘making it’, for the emergent bourgeoisie of Elizabethan and Jacobean London, involved a certain amount of peacock-like display. A number of literary critics have consequently observed that early modern English culture was one in which the identity of a person's inner-self was significantly defined by the outward trappings in which it was encased – that what an observer perceived the wearer of a set of clothes to be (at least in terms of their social status) could define what that figure actually became.¹⁰ As a result, the authorities of early modern England are argued to have quickly become concerned that something as crass as the unregulated consumption of material fabrics could be used to buy perceptions of an innate upper-class standing – thereby altering the metaphorical ‘fabric’ of society itself.

Given that if not rank, then certainly issues of *status* unavoidably revolve around the perceptions of others, such an argument is fairly convincing, and it has therefore been generally accepted that (although appropriations of noble dress were frowned upon and even notionally legislated against by the aristocracy) a situation arose in London during the late-sixteenth century in which sartorial finery – as the most immediate and recognisable manifestation of wealth, power and status – became widely abused by the emergent, flourishing and, above all, *affluent* mercantile and professional classes. A cursory survey of the history of sumptuary legislation supports such a view.

II

The statutory regulation of apparel began in England in 1337; but in the one hundred and seventy years between the first sumptuary directive (of Edward III) and the coronation of Henry VIII, only *five* further laws were passed. By the first years of Henry's reign, however, abuses of apparel were suddenly thought serious enough for the legislature to draw up (sometimes-yearly) decrees against the use of inordinate or unsuitable apparel. These mid-Tudor statutes were supported by regular proclamations that drew attention to the law as it currently stood; the first of which sumptuary edicts (passed in 1510) was followed up by further proclamations in 1514, 1515 and 1533. During the first and second years of the reign of Philip and Mary Tudor (1554) a further series of decrees were made and, by the succession of Elizabeth (at which time the numbers of bourgeois professionals in London had evidently risen to burgeoning proportions), significant demographic changes had clearly brought about a significant increase in authoritarian concerns that the 'meaner sort' should be dressed in attire that was appropriate to their status.

Within the first three years of Elizabeth's reign, two Proclamations of Apparel were added to the statute books (each of which being accompanied by ecclesiastical invectives that were based on doctrines of the humility of Christ and the sin of pride, together with admonishments against the vanity of excessive dress that regularly reverberated from London's pulpits). In Elizabeth's coronation year, for example, the preacher William Avarell thought the situation so serious that he demanded:

Why, had ever *Prometheus* more shapes then the back sutes? Or ye *Hydra* more new heads then the back new garments? not so variable for their matter, as changeable for their fashion: this daie French, tomorrowe English, the next daie Spanish, to daie Italianate, to morrow for fashion a devill incarnat, *o tempora, o mores!* To daie you shine in sutes of silke, to morrow you let it out in cloth of Golde, one daie in blacke for shoue of gravitie, an other daie in white in token of brauerie, this day that colour, the next day another, nowe short waisted, anon long bellied, by and by after great Buttoned, and straight. After plaine laced, or els your Buttons as strange for smalness, as they were monstrous before for greatnes, this yeere bumbd like a barrell, the next shottend like a Herring, nowe your hose hang loose like a bowe case, the next daie as strait as a pudding skinne, one while bulkind for lacke of sockes, another while booted for want of shooes, and thus from you that are the grand maister, doo the inferior members fetch their fashions, & these be the mutabilities of men.¹¹

Acting in tandem with this moral assault, the executive issued a proclamation of apparel on October 20, 1559. Written in language that was clearly intended both to set out an ideal and to rectify the actual situation, it presented:

Articles agreed upon by the Lordes and other of the Queenes Maiesties counsaile, for a reformation of their seruauntes in certayne abuses of apparell, thereby to geve example to al other Lordes, noble men and Gentlemen.¹²

The remit of this first of Elizabeth's proclamations was essentially self-regulatory: in it Lords and masters were commanded to survey their own households and were asked to inform individuals directly under their authority of what they were permitted to wear (which was determined by the

abridged and tabulated set of revisions to the statutes of Henry VIII and Philip and Mary that were appended to the bill).¹³ The proclamation was distributed throughout the kingdom. Like most English sumptuary legislation, however, it should be noted at this point that the laws it outlined were directed almost exclusively against *male* excesses of apparel (and hence Avarell's observation that "these be the mutabilities of *men*").

Given the wide circulation of a clearly tabulated set of guide-lines, there can be little doubt of general public awareness of the issue – and yet male sumptuary transgression evidently did not stop. Elizabeth's second Proclamation (coming on the sixth of May 1562) is therefore an indication of the failure of the delicate and self-policing nature of her first. Taking on an altogether harsher tone, instead of merely seeking to remedy the situation by means of nobles monitoring their staff and setting an example themselves, this decree now set itself out in far more robust language as:

Articles for the Due execution of the statutes of Apparell, and for the reformation of the *outragious excesse thereof*, growen of late times within the Realme.¹⁴

The abuses, now seen as an 'outrage' to the body politic, were an affront to a social class whose jealously guarded and codified appearance was at stake; and a strong emphasis on middle-class social mobility is clearly evident when the document speaks of:

the monstrous abuse of Apparell almost in all Estates, *but principally in the meaner sort*.¹⁵

It is clear however that the transgressors of Elizabethan sumptuary legislation were not of the 'meaner-sorte' by virtue of wealth, since the very act of purchasing the sort of apparel outlined in the statutes was a costly exercise (and Lisa Jardine, in her analysis of 'dress codes, sumptuary law and 'natural' order' cites the example of the substantial bill submitted to Lady Lisle for her daughter Mary Basset's clothing as a case in point).¹⁶ If not poor, then, the abusers of sumptuary regulations must have been of the 'meaner sorte' solely by virtue of birth – something that, unlike financial situation, could not be altered according to the industrious efforts of a commoner in Elizabethan society.

APPROACH	LEGISLATION
No distinction between men and women	11 Edward III, 1337 37 Edward III, 1363 3 Edward IV, 1463 1 & 2 Phillip & Mary, 1554 13 Elizabeth, 1571
Women largely exempted from requirements	22 Edward IV, 1482 May 6, 1562 May 7, 1562 May 7, 1562*
Women exempted from requirements	1 Henry VIII, 1510
Women's requirements parallel to men's	June 15, 1574 February 12, 1580 February 13, 1588 July 6, 1597
Women not mentioned	6 Henry VIII, 1514 7 Henry VIII, 1515 24 Henry VIII, 1533 8 Elizabeth, 1566
	* The second proclamation issued that day

Despite the value of Jardine's argument to an understanding of the function of the

emergent proto-capitalist bourgeoisie in the regulation of apparel, however, what is *not* stressed in her chapter is the fact that offenders of sumptuary regulation were still *not* – in the main part – women; and, whilst it is certainly right that a feminist critic such as Jardine should foreground important aspects of female cultural agency in the controversies over apparel (including the role of women in textile and dressmaking industries), the principal concern of sumptuary legislation in late-sixteenth-century England (as in most other European countries) was unquestionably at this stage the regulation of the *male* body – as may be demonstrated by Reed Benhamou's tabulation of the treatment of women in English sumptuary legislation (reproduced above).

Early modern sumptuary magnificence (whether merited by status or not) arose largely as a result of Italian Renaissance courtesy ideals that had been written in the mid-sixteenth century almost entirely for the guidance of *male* courtiers. In the Italian (and later French) fashions that followed on from such works, then, the whole question of the relationship between various material fabrics and the social fabric of society was primarily organised in relation to essential concepts of *virility* and *masculinity*. Clothing was certainly an outward signifier, it showed both the internal worth and status of its wearer, but at the heart of questions that turned around the *suitability* of sixteenth-century fashions to their wearers lay fundamental concepts of *manliness*. English translations of Italian courtesy writers (such as Castiglione) had therefore observed since 1561 that: "outward beauty [is] a true sign of [...] inward goodness, and in bodies this goodness is imprinted, as it were, for a mark of the soul."¹⁷ The poet Barnabe Barnes likewise observed in 1606 that "all garments should be [...] in worth and fashion correspondent to the state, substance, age, place, time, birth, and honest custome of those persons which use them"¹⁸ – but it should be noted that the *price* of assuming *inappropriate* attire was the loss of heterosexually policed *masculinity*.

As David Kuchta has figured it:

In [the] semiotics of masculinity, the hypothetical "true sign" consisted of an identity between outward beauty and inward goodness, between material signifier and social signified, between appearance and status. In effect, this clothing regime worked by a hierarchy of analogies, by the resemblance between social standing, clothing and expenses [...]¹⁹

but virtually all of the *systems* through which sumptuary legislation worked were regulated in terms of the warranted maintenance (or equally justified loss) of distinctly gendered attributes. According to the principles of *sprezzatura*, costly apparel adorned the courtier precisely because it was natural for him to wear it (and nobles were therefore obliged to put on artlessness, nonchalance and an unaffected attitude towards their clothing precisely in order to retain essential constructions of what was configured as a predominantly heterosexual notion of virility). Kuchta again:

To the modern reader, [the] created appearance of nonchalance seems like deceit, manipulation and effeminacy [...] It was, however, precisely the opposite. To be sure, nonchalance was self-consciously created, but it was created naturalness – with all the

instability and ambivalence that this implies. It meant cultivating a political image which accorded with a natural order, acting and dressing according to one's sexual and social station. It meant being truthful in one's appearances, neither feigning a false modesty, nor affecting an unearned extravagance. Affectation and impersonation were condemned because they drew attention to the theatricality, the self fashioning, the created image – not because the image was false, but because the immediacy of signification, the affiliation between appearance and reality, the correspondence between signifier and signified, was lost [...] Overdressing was a form of semiotic prostitution, an impure traffic between signifier and signified, an exchange muddled by an immoderate attention to materiality [...] della Casa linked immoderate dress with homosexuality: "your garments should not be extremely fancy or extremely ornate, so that no one can say that you are wearing Ganymede's hose [...]"²⁰

Any discrepancy between signifier and signified can thus be seen to have led on to a breakdown of the wearer's (heterosexually) constructed gender and – as a result – to a deconstruction of notions of masculinity itself. As Henry Peachum observed in 1647 (in a comment derived from Plutarch): "gold and silver, worn by martial men, addeth [...] courage and spirit unto them; but in others, effeminacy; or a kind of *womanish vanity*." ²¹

For this reason, one may perceive in artistic depictions of Renaissance courtiers the almost arrogant certainty that their portraits will be read by onlookers as testaments of martial potency and masculine vigour, regardless (indeed perhaps *because of*) the apparently exaggerated effeminacy of the clothing they sometimes wore.

Captain Thomas Lee (pictured right) – the somewhat eccentric offspring of minor Oxfordshire gentry – attempted to make a name and fortune for himself during the rough border scuffles that were undertaken during the imperialist English efforts to colonise Ireland. He eventually died a traitor's death at Tyburn on the thirteenth of February, 1601 (following the unsuccessful rebellion of his master, the Earl of Essex), but the Gheerhaerts portrait that I reproduce here constitutes a significant social document that was produced at a time when Lee was still exerting significant



Figure 1

Marcus Gheerhaerts the Younger,
Portrait of Captain Thomas Lee (1594)

diplomatic pressure on the Crown in his attempts to secure the substantial political office of Chief Negotiator of the Peace in Ireland.

The bare legs and open shirt of Lee's costume present him in the appearance of an Irish foot soldier (or *kerne*). His delicately embroidered shirt may, at first glance, seem effeminate, but his expensive armour and weaponry were certainly intended to leave the Renaissance viewer in no doubt as to his claims to upper-class (and virile) masculine status. The landscape of the painting alludes to his military service in Ireland, and there is even a subtle Latin quotation buried in the leaves of the tree to Lee's left which reads *facere et pati fortia*. This quotation, from Livy's *History of Rome*, may be translated as 'both to act and to suffer with fortitude is a Roman's part' (the words that Livy claims to have been spoken by Gaius Mucius Scaevola after his capture in the camp of Etruscan rebels – a base that he had penetrated in an attempt to assassinate their leader). During Scaevola's expedition, the exemplary Roman soldier wore Etruscan disguise with the approval of the Senate, and, according to Livy, when he was captured he demonstrated typical Roman bravery by thrusting his right hand into a sacrificial fire (an act that so impressed the rebel leader that he immediately decided to settle an enduring peace with Rome).



Figure 2

Detail from the Portrait of Captain Thomas Lee and showing the Latin motto: *facere et pati fortia*

The symbolism that was intended by Lee in this portrait is obvious. The Roman hero with whom he chose to identify himself typified the role that Lee anticipated for himself in Ireland. In Livy's account, the mythical champion was rewarded with substantial lands by a Roman Senate that was much beholden to him; Lee, too, clearly expected significant compensation for his proposed services on behalf of the crown. The 'disguise' that he wears in this portrait has even recently been read by historians of art as symbolic of Lee's 'friendship' with Hugh O'Neil (the Second Earl of Tyrone) – a relationship for which he was often criticised – and it is therefore considered highly probable that this portrait contained a coded message that Lee was making a plea for covert activities *not* to be read as treasonable, but as an essential element of his heroic and masculine vigour – that his 'treason' is therefore represented here as a persona that was put on in the service of his Queen and State.²²

But this portrait also serves a different function with regards to my analysis of the relationship between masculine dress and the construction of gender in the Renaissance – because everything about Thomas Lee *also* typifies the Renaissance social climber. Lee was the son of a relatively minor family for whom a professional career in the army was a means to better himself. In addition to its political allegory, then, this portrait also constitutes one of the most daring efforts at *sprezzatura* imaginable. Bare legged, his blouson open to the waist and with one limp

hand draped over an un-drawn sword, Lee's sense of internal worth must have been great for this image not to signify the effeminacy of the over-dressed upstart.

Compare Lee's portrait with that of George Clifford, Third Earl of Cumberland (reproduced here to the left from a Nicholas Hilliard miniature of around 1590). Cumberland's diplomatic career was superior (and certainly more dignified in its conclusion) than that of Lee. In 1570, Clifford had inherited large estates in the North of England and (in 1588) he successfully commanded a ship against the Armada. Clifford was subsequently appointed a Knight of the Garter in 1592, and spent much of the rest of his life masterminding (what turned out to be spectacularly unsuccessful) naval expeditions against the Spanish bullion fleet. The Hilliard miniature commemorated Clifford's long-term role as Queen Elizabeth's Champion (a court figure avowed to protect her majesty's honour against all comers at the Whitehall Palace Accession Day Tilts – the annual celebrations of the Queen's accession that took place on the seventeenth of November each year of Elizabeth's reign).



Figure 3

Nicholas Hilliard, Portrait of George Clifford, Third Earl of Cumberland (c. 1590)

By the early 1580s, these tilts were amongst the most important of the regular Elizabethan festivals, and contests were accompanied by allegorical plots demonstrating nationalistic Protestant themes. The participant knights (and their entourages) wore spectacular – and extremely costly – attire, featuring emblems and devices that were drawn from various aspects of court culture. Clifford is thus shown here holding his jousting lance and dressed as 'the Knight of Pendragon Castle' (which was one of his own properties in Westmoreland). According to contemporary accounts, Clifford often wore this star-patterned armour for tilts, and its gold braided, jewelled surcoat was embroidered with 'Armillary Spheres' (symbols that were associated with the Queen and her champions) as well as branches of olive and *caducei* (reproductions of the Roman god Mercury's serpent-encircled wand); the Queen's jewelled globe is also proudly displayed on Clifford's hat, and both his helmet and his gauntlets are on display.

The perspective scene in the middle-ground (to the left) is that of the Thames, leading towards the tilting yard at Whitehall Palace; it therefore further emphasises Clifford's masculine role as Queen's champion. To the right (in the foreground) an emblematic shield hangs from a tree; its motto, '*Hasta quan[do]*', self-assuredly announcing that Clifford will wield his lance '*hasta*' as Queen's Champion, until the Sun, Moon and Earth are eclipsed ...²³



Figure 4

Detail from the Portrait of George Clifford, showing the sun, moon & stars and the Latin motto: *hasta quan[do]*

This miniature is certainly a confident assertion of nobility; but it is also one in which a particularly virile figuration of *masculinity* is inextricably intertwined with the sumptuary legislation that governed Clifford's rights to the clothing he wore (and this because the Hilliard miniature shows the Earl of Cumberland at both the height of his powers *and* at the limits of what he was permitted to wear – for, as the very first line of the sumptuary tables of 1599 stated, “None shall wear / Cloth of Gold / Except / Earls and above that rank and Knights of the Garter”). Clifford, at this point in time, was thus doubly qualified to wear gold cloth, and was evidently proud for all to know it. Moreover, the very *reason* for his appropriation of such extravagant attire is consistently framed up – in allegorical terms – as a masculinised and martial defence of his Virgin Queen's (sexual) honour. The benign phallic *puissance* of his office is consequently symbolised in the sturdy lance that he proudly displays.

For those not fortunate enough to be in the position of a George Clifford (those whose pretences at noble status did not match up to their 'true' worth), the very act of misappropriating such signifiers could lead to an almost inevitable collapse of gender-identity. As we have seen, dressing outside of one's social station led on to both 'idolatry' and 'effeminacy'. Thinking that the signifier was an end in itself (or that it somehow *created* the signified) was a distinctly feminine form of folly and, as William Rankins observed in one of seven verse satires published in 1598, “[he who] thinks the sign the substance is, / Erres, and his wit doth wander much amisse.”²⁴ As Kuchta has observed:

For Renaissance courtesy writers, gender and semiotics were linked. Effeminacy was found in the effected misuse of signs by vain upstarts. Effeminacy meant dressing out of place, thus calling attention to one's dress in a kind of 'womanish vanity'. Effeminacy was idolatry: treating arbitrary signifiers like idols, endowed with inherent meaning, mistaking the signifier for signified.²⁵

In order to avoid such a destabilising breakdown of social conventions (and the resultant threat to masculinity that they contained), the second of Elizabeth's Sumptuary Proclamations went

further than her first and sought to set in operation strict systems of monitoring and punishment for transgressors of what were now also more fully cited Henrian dress codes.

Elizabeth's 1562 proclamation therefore commanded that:

the maior court of Aldermen shall take and observe the like order [by appointing officers who would ...] examine all offendours in the sort above written, and apprehending them to bryng them to the Alderman of the ward, he to commit them to prison.²⁶

Threatening incarceration as punishment, Elizabeth's second Proclamation of Apparel interestingly makes *special* reference to the Inns of Court and to the Houses of Chancery, where it seems the worst offenders were situated (a fact that supports the social mobility thesis, since it is precisely these areas of London to which the burgeoning middle-classes flocked); yet such a reference to specific areas of London *also* reinforces the fact that legislation was almost entirely focussed upon *male* transgression in the mid-sixteenth-century, because these areas of London were also the exclusive province of professions to which women had traditionally been precluded entry.

The second Elizabethan edict differed from that of 1559 in that it was no longer an instruction that noble households ensure that their servants wear appropriate clothing. Instead, it was a clear attempt to stop independent male members of a rising middle-class from emulating the dress habits of their social superiors (and an attempt to avoid a related crisis of masculinity in the capital). The government was clearly extremely concerned about the sumptuary situation, and initial clampdowns subsequent to the proclamation's publication were exceptionally strict. Reports were to be made to the Lord Chancellor (or the Lord Keeper of the Seal) every fifteen days during the first two months following its circulation, then every six weeks for a year and, finally, relaxing only as far as being available at any time, at the Lord Chancellor's discretion, should abuses start up again. Servants were to be directly punished for transgression and their masters were to be held accountable. In addition, the order was to be followed not only in London or in selected areas, but:

[in the] suburbes, out of the liberties of London, and in Westminster, and in the other exempted places, by the officers of those places [...] and [...] in all cities, Townes and villages throughout the realme.²⁷

As before – and in tandem with this legislation – preachers and theologians fashioned sardonic images of the overdressed man as a vain, effeminate and preposterous creature, too blinded by his obtuse conceit to see the ridiculous nature of his efforts. Invectives asserted that such behaviour was not in keeping with the followers of a humble Christ as the Church and Executive worked hand in glove to attempt to preserve their discretely classed (and gendered) social hierarchy.

One should still note, however, that up to (and including) this proclamation of 1562 there was still no explicit mention of women's raiment, except a short addition at the end of the second Elizabethan proclamation that read:

ladyes and gentil women attendinge upon the Quene, or resortyng to the court, and theyr gentyl-women, to be appareled accordyng to the auncient order of the court [...] to th'intent there may be a difference of estates knowen by theyr apparell [...] ²⁸

None of the legislation thus far therefore indicates a vogue for cross-dressing of any sort; it is rather designed to preserve an ageing social order that was structured along hierarchical lines according to birth and nobility (as opposed to individual industry). What is evident, is that those who were transgressing the accepted boundaries of dress were those who had in some way sought to elevate themselves from the 'meaner sort' through education or commerce – and who now found themselves in an indeterminate state of limbo between classes. They had money, yet were denied the social status of the ruling class. They were also – nearly always – men.

The conclusions that I wish to draw from this brief survey of legislation are twofold: (i) that the old order of feudalism was beginning to be eroded by a new type of proto-capitalist threat (professionals who were wealthier than those who had previously maintained their unique position by virtue solely of noble lineage); and (ii) that other than implying that the breaking of sumptuary legislation led on to effeminacy in vain men, little of the Elizabethan regulation acknowledged any overt notion of *gender specific* transgression in the policing of apparel. During the rest of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, only two further proclamations were made. The first of which came in 1588, after a gap of nearly thirty years (indicating that either the previous legislation had largely worked, or – on the contrary – that the authorities had largely given up trying to enforce unworkable restrictions on their subjects' clothing). By the time King James succeeded to the throne in 1603, the legal battle against inappropriate apparel appeared to have been largely lost; and there were no further attempts either by James or his Parliament to regulate the apparel of the lower classes. When the last regulation of apparel came in 1604, it took the form of a *repeal* of all previous legislation. The occasional invective against pride was still articulated from pulpits, for sure, but by and large the 'meaner sorte' had evidently won their battle. It was a demonstration of the power of the emergent middle-classes at the dawn of the proto-capitalist era, together with a manifestation of the power of clothing to gain *social recognition* and *status*.

III

During the years in which the controversy over the inappropriate use of apparel by the 'meaner sort' declined, another debate centring on attire grew. Eventually and unmistakably, it was to take over from Elizabethan anxieties concerning clothing and rank; yet unlike the former dispute,

for some reason, it never saw legislation directly invoked against it (despite in many ways being viewed by both Church and State as much more disconcerting).²⁹ Evidence of a second controversy, centring on the misuse of certain items of *gender-specific* clothing, begins to emerge in poetic literature dating from as early as the fifteen-seventies and reaches its climax some fifty years later in the pamphlet literature of the mid-sixteen-twenties. Most of the evidence surrounding the subsequent debate comes from the mid-Jacobean period; yet, strangely, there is little documentary proof of explicit legislative attempts by the new monarch to halt it. Apparently, James' only reaction to a phenomenon that was, in the words of one pamphleteer, "an infection that emulates the plague, and throwes itself amongst women of all degrees, all deserts, and all ages; from the capitoll to the cottage"³⁰ was a commandment, in 1620, that priests warn against it in sermons, combined with a vague hint at further direct action – a threat that was in actual fact never carried out.³¹ The controversy that attracted such a slight response from James (in contrast to Elizabeth's profound concern about mis-dressed commoners) was a new vogue for self-gendering through the appropriation of sex-signifying apparel, the emergence of cross-dressed (or quasi-cross-dressed) women and (to a lesser degree) of men 'effeminised' by their adoption of female fashions. It is to this gender-specific sumptuary transgression that I wish to turn my attention in the rest of this chapter.

Just as during the mid-to-end of the sixteenth century the rising middle-classes had apparently sought to re-define themselves, attain social respectability and gain power by means of a usurpation of clothing rightfully belonging to their social superiors; so, from the fifteen-seventies onwards, a growing number of principally middle-and-upper-class women are argued to have adopted (and adapted) male attire in an attempt to liberate themselves from the confines of being viewed – and therefore esteemed – as the weaker element within a patriarchal hierarchy of the sexes.³² If one is to believe the polemical literature that arose in response to this trend, a new band of quasi-androgynous, self proclaimed Viragos or Amazons began to assert their rights to operate in male spheres from the turn of the seventeenth century. Their clarion call was a brazen proto-feminist defence of their right to appropriate masculine garments, language and behaviour. Such women were christened with a corrupted Latin moniker *hic mulier* (a humorous, if incorrect, exchange of Latin demonstrative pronouns in which *hic* – used for masculine nouns – was employed in the place of *hæc* – for feminine – before *mulier*, meaning woman).

It had, of course, occasionally been the case before the late-sixteenth century, that certain notorious women in mainland Europe had completely cross-dressed as men in order to escape imprisonment, to engage in male professions, to play tricks on their neighbours and so on.³³ It is also clear that such figures had occasionally also appeared in England since, when discovered, they appear in various towns' correction books or court records.³⁴ Women, cross-dressed as doctors, lawyers and pageboys are also amply evidenced in the sub-plots of many plays from the period (although oftentimes in scenarios that surreptitiously transpose them abroad by means of displacement to Verona, Venice, Illyria or the Ardennes).³⁵ During the reign of James I, however,

it appears that historically identifiable figures (such as Mary Frith, the real life character who acted as the basis of Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl*), together with a whole body of apparently unidentified women, began to be regularly alluded to in poetic and dramatic literature (as well as in pamphlets and sermons). This was due entirely to their half cross-dressed appearance – a deliberate conflation of male and female sumptuary semiotics that has recently been interpreted by certain critics as a gender-political statement and not the simple expediency of transitory disguise.

The role of Elizabeth herself in the emergence of the early modern Virago is perhaps particularly significant. Like *hic mulier*, Elizabeth toyed with Latin grammar in order to generate around herself enough rhetorical elbowroom to act as she wished. As Janel Mueller has observed, the Queen's favourite term for herself (that of 'prince') was derived from a noun of common gender (the Latin *princeps*, meaning prince, principal or chief) and her reliance on the concept of *virtue* is further etymologically proof of a desire to be linked to the masculine *vir*.³⁶ The first female monarch since Queen Matilda's (brief) reign in the twelfth century, Elizabeth was careful to set herself out from the start of her reign as having two bodies: the body politic and her actual, physical or mortal body. A 1554 Parliamentary Act Concerning Regal Power even seems to imply that the body politic of the Queen was male (and therefore circumscribes her connections with power within the realm of masculine endeavour). As Mueller has shown, Elizabeth repeatedly set herself apart from the feminine world in order to act decisively as a monarch, her own Privy Councillors describing her in such instances as "More than a man, and (in troth) sometyne less than a woman."³⁷

Leah Marcus has observed of our perceptions of Elizabeth:

We are accustomed to thinking of the Virgin Queen in terms of a set of clearly female identities. As celebrated in the 1580s and 1590s, she was the divine Astrea returned, or, in place of the Holy Virgin banished from Protestant spirituality, a secularized Virgin Mother to the nation. She was Queen of Shepherds, a new Deborah, a Cynthia or Diana, the unreachable object of male desire and worship. But alongside such womanly identifications, which she certainly did nothing to discourage, the Queen possessed a set of symbolic male identities which are much less familiar to us, in part because they surface most frequently in her speeches and public pronouncements, in part, I suspect, because her rhetoric confounds our own preconceived notions about gender.³⁸

Whether arising as an indirect consequence of such a powerful female role-model, from the beginnings of a breakdown in the one-sex anatomical paradigm (and the attendant emergence of woman as an autonomous biological identity), from the increasing significance of female capital (and labour) in proto-capitalist commerce and industry, from the rising cultural agency of the small coterie of female courtiers that later surrounded Queen Anne, or – what is undoubtedly most likely – a subtle combination of *all* of these phenomena; the sociological and literary notoriety that was attained by representations of cross-dressed Virago women in cultural forms as diverse as the court masque, in poetry, drama and in pamphlet literature began to provide a social kudos that arguably proved attractive to many elite and middle-class women – and their

preoccupation with cross (or quasi cross)-dressing doubtless also had a 'trickle-down' effect that served to increase the numbers of less-privileged women engaging in the phenomenon on the streets of early-modern London.³⁹

What I want to stress here is the fact that women in London's upper classes at the turn of the seventeenth century were increasingly enfranchised both economically *and* intellectually. Over the last fifty years – through the disciplines of anatomy and philosophy – they had emerged as discretely sexed entities and were no longer universally accepted as anatomical deviants, or imperfect variants, of their male counterparts; in the shape of Elizabeth they had also witnessed the authority and command of a phenomenally successful female monarch for the first time since the early middle-ages. In the form of the new court's masquing activities, Queen Anne was, likewise, not only asserting female agency in performance (by locating women's bodies more centrally in entertainments) but, at times, also controlling the means of dramatic production herself (and thereby pushing back the boundaries of what Dymphna Callaghan has recently called "histrionic femininity").⁴⁰

According to a host of poets, playwrights and pamphleteers, from the late 1500s onwards a threatening minority of women began to adopt a half-male, half-female style of clothing that critics have interpreted as a manifestation of their social liberation – and a signifier of their ability to function with greater social (and sexual) freedom outside the confines of patriarchal society (perhaps even of their desire to overthrow it, for as one such figure put it: "what greater glory can come to the masculine woman (as you terme her) then to *overrule* her parents and husband?").⁴¹ Whatever the motivations of these women, however (and we cannot know them), one thing is clear: from the intensity of contemporaneous debate surrounding the phenomenon, it is obvious that both masculine authority and male gender-identity were both put under considerable strain. Examination of male responses to such women (in poetry and drama as well as in pamphlet literature) reveals the extent of the crisis of masculine identity that was being undergone in the period.

Polemical literature dealing with female fashion and behaviour varied from outright condemnations of all women (in chauvinists like Swetnam) to counterblasts against misogyny that were penned by the 'pro-feminists' who championed the virago's cause and celebrated what they saw as a newly liberated sex. From around 1615, then, in both England and France, a debate about women that has become known as the *querelles des femmes* produced a wealth of literature that Mark Breitenberg amongst others has recently demonstrated to have been both a manifestation of the ideological contradictions of masculine anxiety and, paradoxically, a productive force in the perpetuation of western patriarchal systems.⁴² Within a period of three years, titles such as *The Arraignment of Lewd Idle Froward* [sic] and *Unconstant Women* and *L'Alphabet de l'Imperfection et Malice des Femmes* had been answered by works such as *Le Champion des Femmes*, *A Mouzell for Melastomus*, *The Worming of a Mad Dogge* and *Esther*

hath Hanged Haman.⁴³ Pamphlets such as these have often been considered to be of slight literary worth, because they seek to present zealous arguments in excessive and diatribe-like language – they frequently articulate a single philosophical position (and are often solely as a riposte to a previous – sometimes non-extant – attack); the role of women in the authorship of such literature has even been held up to question by recent feminist critics.⁴⁴ Yet, set against the more ambivalent and nuanced treatments of *hic mulier* that are to be found in poetry and drama, pamphlet literature does provide an interesting insight into the depth and variation of contemporary masculine responses to the FTM cross-dresser.

Mark Breitenberg has undertaken a startling analysis of female cross-dressing in which he puts overblown misogynist responses to the phenomenon down, almost entirely, to male *anatomical* anxiety. Breitenberg has observed that – because the controversy over cross-dressing in the 1620s appears to be well in excess of the actual threat posed by the limited numbers of females who actually engaged in the phenomenon – women must not have been the source of the problem at all, but were rather “catalytic signs of a set of prior fears and anxieties.”⁴⁵ Locating his definition of male anxiety within the anatomical insecurities that were generated by the ‘one-sex’ model, Breitenberg has pointed out that a stable sex and gender system would not have been disturbed by “such an infrequent and obviously theatrical play with gender identification” as cross-dressing (Breitenberg 151). After briefly outlining Laqueur’s one-sex model of Renaissance reproductive anatomy, Breitenberg therefore proceeds to highlight the significance of fears of an ‘innate biological instability’ to the cross-dressing controversy and observes:

With this merely caloric explanation in mind [the notion that heat equals sex], male anatomical superiority must surely have been experienced as tenuous (and potentially reversible), thus encouraging the symbolic importance of the codpiece as an outward sign of something in actuality less secure. (Breitenberg 151)

In his analysis, Breitenberg hones in on one fragile perception of male anatomy and its sumptuary signifier – the codpiece. He therefore significantly opens his chapter on FTM cross-dressing with the following epigram from William Gamage’s *On the Feminine Supremacie*:

I often hard, but never read till now,
That woman-kinde the codpeeces did weare;
But in those Isles, the men to women bow,
Which do their names of male, and female beare [...] ⁴⁶

and uses it to suggest that:

Without what would later become a biologically essentialist basis for gender identity, the early modern period requires a rhetoric of differentiation that continuously needs to assert the naturalness and immutability of its categories from other sources. Paradoxically, apparel and language – both mutable and manipulable semiotic systems – are often the media in which “natural” differences are supposed to find accurate representation (Breitenberg 151 - 52).

Breitenberg (like Levine in her analysis of anti-theatrical discourse) accordingly perceives male fears of actual bodily dissolution as being central to nearly all gender-based masculine anxiety in

the early-modern period. Operating exclusively within a Laqueurean 'one-sex' paradigm, Breitenberg therefore draws the conclusion (citing Marjorie Garber in order to highlight his chosen signifier of male phallic authority) that, in the control of the codpiece, the "anxiety of male artificiality is summed up, as it were, in a nutshell."⁴⁷

However, this reading of Gamage's reference to female appropriations of the codpiece seems to me to be both extraordinarily phallogentric and otherwise unproductive on a number of levels. Historians of fashion have shown that, by the 1620s, codpieces were an outmoded article of clothing that were seldom worn by *anyone*. In addition, an argument such as Breitenberg's seems inadvertently to *abrogate* the role of female *agency* in the cross-dressing phenomenon almost entirely; and, because Breitenberg chooses to dwell on male *anatomical* instability (rather than on questions of a female challenge to social *control* and *authority*), the subtle interplay between clothing, class and *status* (that is – I would assert – essential to an understanding of FTM cross-dressing in the period) is repeatedly circumvented. As feminist critics such as Jean Howard have recently more than adeptly demonstrated, the phenomenon of FTM cross-dressing was a kind of "dressing up" (precisely *because* of the fact that it pretended to augmentations of *authority* and *social standing*). Howard has observed that gender relations in the early modern period – as in ours – were inescapably also *power* relations, and that instances of cross-dressing (as with other occurrences of increased female agency in the period) can be tangibly linked to the geographical sites of rapid social and economic change in which women were asserting themselves.⁴⁸ Lisa Jardine has also pointed out that many of the early modern period's misgivings about women were actually the result of a displacement of more general anxieties arising as a direct result of *social* dislocation, or, as she puts it:

to point a finger at woman's affecting of the badges of male office – dress, arms, behaviour – was to pin down a potent symbol of the threat to order which was perceived dimly as present in the entire shift from feudal to mercantile society.⁴⁹

As I hope I will demonstrate in the survey of poetic and pamphlet literature that follows in this chapter, assaults on *hic mulier* were, broadly speaking, attacks on inappropriate declarations of the female right to *power* and *status*, rather than male fears about unstable or insecure phalluses (in either their anatomical or their sumptuary incarnations). Whilst these women therefore sought to be:

masculine in their genders and whole generations, from the mother to the youngest daughter; masculine in number, from one to multitudes; masculine in case, even from the head to the foot; masculine in moode, from bold speech, to impudent action [...] ⁵⁰

there is *no* evidence *at all* that they sought to be masculine in their *anatomy*. In any case, the *hic mulier* figure seldom even wore a codpiece (as may be demonstrated by examination of the frontispiece to both her own pamphlet and that of *Haec Vir*, by the fact that Queen Anne does not sport such a phallic prosthesis in the Paul van Somers portrait of 1617, that Aspatia lacks one on

the cover of *The Maid's Tragedy* and that Moll Cutpurse likewise wants for one in the woodcut to *The Roaring Girl* – as does Long Meg of Westminster in the pamphlet bearing her name).

What such figures *do* choose to appropriate – and frequently – are pistols, swords and poniards, a piece of evidence that Breitenberg acknowledges, but puts down to the fact that:

It is quite consistent with an early modern sensibility to read this addition to the cross-dresser's attire [that of swords, daggers or pistols] as phallic appropriation [...] Here the appropriation involves a symbol of the male anatomy – they've "added one thing" to their "nothing" and in so doing collapsed a key element of anatomical differentiation. (Breitenberg 160).

Leaving aside the fact that the whole language of Breitenberg's observation relies entirely on notions of essential sexual *difference* (women add 'something' to 'nothing' and collapse 'anatomical differentiation') what is not explored adequately here is the fact that such 'phalluses' are *symbolic* of male *authority* rather than male *anatomy*. Moreover, there may well have been a pragmatic notion of self defence in operation in the commandeering of *any* weapon by the cross-dressed woman – and especially given the lascivious attributions of sexual incontinence and whoredom that were habitually attributed to such women by misogynist polemicists (a point that has been astutely picked up on elsewhere by Jean Howard, in her analysis of Middleton and Dekker's Moll Cutpurse).⁵¹

Rather than falling back onto notions of 'perilous masculinity', then (as derived from the one-sex model), or the (erroneous) notion that early modern males understood women to be separated from masculine 'perfection' by only a few degrees of heat (and concomitantly that they really *did* appreciate the whole order of patriarchy to be built upon somewhat tenuous anatomical foundations), I want to make another – and perhaps more radical – proposition here. The philosophical problem encapsulated in the *hic mulier* controversy is *not*, I think, one that turns around a conception of women that considered them to be "anatomically *the same* and therefore dangerously equal", but rather that they had – by the turn of the seventeenth century – become "anatomically *different* and therefore *not necessarily unequal*."

I am arguing that the 'one-sex' model, far from being an example of objective science, was consistently used (until the mid-sixteenth century at least) to shore up the misogyny of female subordination to men (a situation that was made *philosophically* possible precisely *because* the 'one-sex' paradigm outlined a conception of women in which they were *intrinsically* imperfect: lacking in heat, these creatures were feeble, scrawny and abortive males). Once a notion of essential *difference* began to emerge in post-Vesalian scientific and philosophical discourse (as I hope to have demonstrated in chapter one of this dissertation) the whole notion of a hierarchical organisation of *two* sexes (as opposed to one) along similar lines became philosophically problematic (as we have seen in Guibelet's observations). It was *this* realisation that I would argue to have constituted a greater threat to conventional patriarchal authority than any fears of actual male *anatomical* instability (that – as I have argued above – never actually existed). The

emergence of woman as a biological entity *in her own right* therefore constituted one more reason (amongst a host of others, including economic ones) that explains why certain (and principally elite) women took to FTM cross-dressing. On these grounds I will later want to return to Howard's observations about *geography* as a factor in the issue of FTM transvestism, but I first need to dwell a little more explicitly on this question of equality as a function of difference.

Jean Howard admits that there are certain rhetorical problems in resolving Stephen Greenblatt's claims about the performativity of sex and gender (in social cross-dressing, in transvestite theatre, and as a result of Laqueur's 'one-sex' model) on the one hand, with the insistence on a natural *two-sex* gender system (derived, she perceives, from Biblical authority and articulated in virtually all anti-transvestite polemics) on the other. As a result, she argues that current criticism must acknowledge a plurality of discourses in the Renaissance.⁵² Whilst this is undoubtedly a sagacious stance to adopt, Howard still does not quite manage to square the circle between conceptions of 'science' (on the one hand) and the 'ideology and violence' that she considers to have been used to uphold patriarchy (on the other). With reference to the 'one-sex' model, she therefore observes:

The interesting possibility raised by Laqueur's work is that differences may not in the Renaissance have always of necessarily been built upon a self evident notion of biological sexual difference as was to be true in the nineteenth century [...] That simply means that gender difference and hierarchy had to be produced and secured – through ideological interpellation when possible, through force when necessary – on other grounds. If women were not inevitably depicted as anatomically different from men in some essential way, they could be seen as different merely by virtue of their lack of masculine perfection (softer, weaker, less hot) and their subordination justified on those grounds.⁵³

Howard's observation would seem to imply that *ideology* came into play only *after* a detached and empirical version of science had concluded its work; or, put another way, that because *anatomy itself* could not assert inferiority, a philosophical *interpretation* of anatomy had to do it. Yet, as critics such as Cynthia Marshall, Valerie Traub, Howard Marchitello and Jonathan Sawday have all recently observed, early modern corporal science was – just like our own – *never* neutral but was, rather, a set of "specific aesthetic and ideological strategies, or to use [Judith] Butler's phrase [a] "process of materialization," whereby gendered differentiations of embodiment were constructed and stabilized."⁵⁴ My point here is simple: the one-sex model is a clear example of science acting *as* ideology (operating at its most fundamental level). Both the 'one-sex' paradigm's rhetoric *and* its conclusions consequently functioned as a *primary* intellectual step in the construction of sociological systems of subordination that set out to control women. It was not through anatomical *difference* that early-Renaissance women were subjugated, but rather because they were considered *imperfect* male homologues.

Since it is seldom through articulations of similitude, but rather as a result of those of *difference*, that radical campaigns for equality have most successfully asserted themselves throughout

history, I am arguing here that the breakdown of the 'one-sex' anatomical model (and the concomitant emergence of two discrete biological exemplars of humankind) provided an intellectual and philosophical *context* in which proto-feminist articulations of equality could be rooted in the manifest *distinctions* that were now seen to exist between men and women.

My point is straightforward and I will illustrate it with a concrete example: I am (in alphabetical order) neither black, nor gay, nor a woman; if I define other exemplars of person-kind in terms of their 'imperfection' in relation to my white, male and heterosexual subjectivity I will inevitably exhibit prejudice. If – on the other hand – I acknowledge that there are *different* subjectivities and modalities of existence to my own (or if I have it forcefully brought to my attention) I may well be persuaded to accept that, although *different*, these subjectivities could well be *equal* to mine. Or, put even another way: judging ethnic or religious groups, sexual orientations or genders according to the terms of others will consistently lead to intolerance and discrimination – a sense of 'not matching up', of 'failing' of being (in the language of the one-sex model) 'imperfect' – whereas acknowledging that there are several *discrete* frames of human reference will not: and hence *hic mulier's* extended insistence, in 1620, on the fact that it was not '*nature*' but '*custome*' that had subordinated women to men and that "*custome* is an Idiot."⁵⁵

Returning to geography, Jean Howard's use of (Marxist-Leninist) social history to underscore the significance of particular geographical areas (and particularly those of great economic change) in the increase of attempts to regulate women is astute. She sets the upland wood and pasture areas of the West Country (where there was a strong influx of migrant labour, extended families were dispersed into highly nucleated households, and capitalism had infiltrated in terms of the heavy reliance on the 'putting out' system of manufacture) against the more centralised village communities of the grain growing valleys ("where the population was more stable, families less nucleated, and the pace of social change less rapid.")⁵⁶ Citing the work of David Underdown, Jean Howard has asserted that the century between 1560 and 1660 saw signs of an increased use of charivaris and the cucking stool (both of which were primarily used to discipline unruly women) in the former communities but not in the latter. In addition, she has also observed that:

Cities were another site of gender tension, in part simply because they uprooted people from traditional social structures [... in part also because they] created new and unsettling positions for middle-class women, in particular, to occupy [... C]ity women could engage in urban pleasures such as going to the theater or buying the commodities produced by English trade and manufacture. Some came to occupy positions of economic power as widows of merchants or as visible workers in their husbands' shops.⁵⁷

Howard is undoubtedly right; but I also think that the city is also important for *another* reason. There is a town versus country divide in operation in the *hic mulier* phenomenon that is significant not only in economic, but also in *culturally elite* and *intellectual* terms. This because whilst there were increases in the sort of 'women on top' inversions that are associated with shrews, scolds and husband-beaters in the country, the transgressive phenomenon of *cross-dressing* was limited (and the evidence points to its being limited just about entirely) to London;

moreover, in the capital it was principally restricted to the sort of upper-class women who might well have been directly (or obliquely) connected to the privileged circles of society in which scientific and philosophical notions of women were most rapidly changing.

In one anti-transvestite invective of 1615 Thomas Adams therefore draws attention to the town versus country divide as he describes:

Such translations and borrowing of formes, that a silly countryman walking in the city, can scarce say, there goes a man, or there a woman. Woman as she was *woman*, the image of *man*: now she bears the image of *man* indeed, but in a crosse and *mad* fashion; almost to the quite defacing of the *image* of God.⁵⁸

Yet, more significant than this, as part of her own defence *hic mulier* also stressed her ability to operate in working environments that were not only associated with the capital, but were *directly connected* to the realm of science (and, in particular, to anatomy). The anonymous female author of *Muld Sacke: or the Apologie of Hic Mulier* therefore stated, again in 1620, that woman was now not only “so pitiful that she cuts the hayre of her head, to cover [men’s] shallow braines, or hornes” and that her physical prowess is “so stout that she disarmes the martial [and] degrades knights by unspurring (or rather oft spurring) them” but significantly that she was “so industrious that she is become Painter, Apothecarie, Chirurgion, Barber, and whatnot.”⁵⁹ With such *anatomical* ideas in mind, I want now to turn to early literary evidence of a tradition of female cross-dressers and, more significantly, to an analysis of anxious male reactions to them.

IV

In 1576, George Gascoigne (an MP and minor court-poet who wrote verses and masques for Queen Elizabeth’s entertainment at Kenilworth) wrote *The Steele Glas* as a satire ‘against the hypocrisy and excesse of the age.’⁶⁰ The poem is of special interest to my argument because it appears (upon first examination at least) to be filled with the rhetoric of sexual dissolution, and seems to claim that biological sex is up to the volition of an individual – a fluid subjectivity to be defined at will. If readers take Gascoigne at his word in the dedication to *The Steele Glas*, they are led to believe that the self-fashioning of sex-identity was a plausible artistic trope (and perhaps, therefore, that it still held philosophical currency) in the late-sixteenth century. The introductory verses to Gascoigne’s poem (which take the form of a confession to his patron, Lord Gray of Wilton, to whom the work is dedicated) reveal, with a high degree of sexual ambivalence, the fact that the author suspects:

I n’am a man, as some do thinke I am,
(Laugh not good Lord) I am in dede a dame,
Or at the least; a right *Hermaphrodite* [...]
And thus (my Lord) I live a weary life
Not as I seemed, a man sometimes of might

But womã like, whose tears must venge his harms.⁶¹

The lines seem to say that a man may legitimately gender himself as a woman and, significantly, that such an action creates an androgynous body; the language of the main poem that follows certainly continues to oscillate between the sexes and regularly transposes masculine and feminine subjects with their opposing possessive adjectives as if male and female were one and the same thing.⁶² The suggestion certainly *appears* to be that the sex of Gascoigne's subject, his 'I' (a capital letter to which I shall later return), is as able to metamorphose as his poetic language.

Admittedly, words are manipulated to an astonishing degree in this dedication. We might note, for example, the direct reversal of the word 'man' as it appears – as part of a palindrome – in the first line ('I *n'am a man*') – a skilled visual reversal of masculinity that is as equally wrapped up in a negation of the self ('I am not') as it is in turning the word 'man' on its head. Moreover, we might observe the way in which the word 'male' is also subtly reversed back on itself (by means of a typographical similarity between the actual capitalised first person singular 'I' and an inferred lowercase 'l') in the conclusion to the first line: 'some do thinke *I am*.' A typographical rendition, perhaps, of the sort of 'dissolution' into female form that Levine and Breitenberg have articulated as the primary locus of 'tenuous masculinity's' gender-anxiety. As if such an opening were not extraordinary enough in itself, in addition to these visual manipulations that turn both 'man' and 'male' inside out, Gascoigne sets up a further subtle undermining of his virility (and a reinforcement of muliebrity) by means of a rhyme and alliteration scheme that repeats the first person singular present tense of the verb 'to be' and echoes: 'n'am a man [...] in dede a dame'. 'Being', according to a very threatened George Gascoigne, would appear to be a distinctly female endeavour.

So what might be the cause of such a deliberate effacement of masculinity? Well, quite early in the poem (in language that is itself derived from courtesy theory) the author reveals one cause of sexual instability. Gascoigne's male gender-anxiety has been caused, in part at least, by the abandonment of sumptuary regulation and the effeminate idolatry of contemporary male misappropriations of apparel. Gascoigne therefore laments of:

Our bumbast hose, our treble double ruffes,
Our sutes of silke, our comely garded capes,
Our knit silke stockes, and spanish lether shoes,
(Yea velvet serves, oftymes to trample in)
Our plumes, our spangs, and al our queint aray
Are pricking spurres, provoking filthy pride,
And snares (unseen) which lede a man to hel.⁶³

Compounding (and exaggerating) sumptuary excess in order to paint a picture of an extravagantly ruff-bedecked blade, parading in his silk suit and sporting (dangerously Catholic) Spanish leather shoes or (extraordinarily impracticable) velvet ones – and topped off with an extravagant array of plumes and spangs, one can begin to see what Gascoigne might well

actually fear: the kind of effeminisation that was traditionally associated with the overdressed upstart. Yet it is not until the reader comes to the *epilogue* of the poem – and a lengthy passage on what is, in the literature of the mid-to late sixteenth century at least, a phenomenon altogether less expounded upon – that one *finally* meets what I think is the most deep-rooted cause of Gascoigne's apparent anxieties: because the entire narrative closure of *The Steele Glas* is dedicated to a satire on the FTM cross-dresser. Saving the worst till last, Gascoigne documents the *naissance* of the female transvestite in terms of her 'monstrosity' (the terminology that will later come to be used in nearly every attack on *hic mulier*):

Alas (my lord) my hast was al to hote,
I shut my glasse, before you gased your fill,
At a glimpse, my seely selfe have spied,
A stranger trowpe, than any yet were sene
Beholde (my Lorde) what monsters muster here [...]
What should these be? (speake you my lovely Lord)
They be not men: for why? they have no beards
They be no boyes, which weare such side lōg gownes.
They be no Gods, for al their gallant glosse.
They be no divels, (trow) which seme so saintish.
What be they? women? Masking in men's weedes?
With dutchkin dublets, and with lerkins iagged?
With Spanish spangs, and ruffes set out of France,
With high copt hattes, and fethers flaunt a flaunt?
They be so sure even *Wo to Men* in dede⁶⁴

On the surface, the perception of sex-identity that is brought into play in order to categorise these FTM cross-dressers would seem to be one that functions almost uniquely by means of a de-codification of external signifiers: 'side- lōg gownes [...] men's weedes' etc. Closer examination, however (even within such an apparel-centric system), allows the reader to detect a *combination* of external (sumptuary) signifiers together with essential (biological) ones. When he is confronted with the blurred sexual boundaries of the necromantic body, Macbeth will later stutter "you *should* be women / And yet your beards forbid me to interpret that you *are* so." ⁶⁵ Here, too, Gascoigne seems to rely on a biological verity – the presence (or lack) of facial hair – as a principal element in attributing sex to the 'monstrous' women with whom he is confronted. Significantly, then, Gascoigne looks first to the body and *then* goes on to examine apparel; and, decisively, his conclusion reveals the *inability* of outward signifiers to have any effect on the sex-identity of the transvestite subject who appropriates them. In this poem Gascoigne consequently both acknowledges that FTM cross-dressers *remain women* and recognises that their assumption of masculine attire (and behaviour) poses a tangible threat to patriarchal *authority*. 'What be they? women? Masking in men's weedes? [...] They be so sure even *Wo to Men* in dede.' The point here is, I think, that the assumption of men's weedes is both a sumptuary transgression and an *analogy* for female usurpations of masculine *authority* (rather than male anatomy).

The fact that female cross-dressing is *not* here perceived as capable of rendering women *anatomically* male, but that it *did* unequivocally signal a *sociological* threat to male supremacy, is

equally hinted at in a much-misunderstood passage from Philip Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses* in which it is observed:

The Women also there [in London theatres] have dublets & lerkins, as men have heer, buttoned up the brest, and made with wings, welts, and pinions on the shoulder points, as mans apparel is for all the world: & though this be a kinde of attire appropriate onely to man, yet they blush not to weare it; and if they could as well chaunge their sex & put on the kinde of man, as they can weare apparel assigned onely to man, I think thei would as verely become men indeed.⁶⁶

Mark Breitenberg, in his analysis of this passage, conveniently misquotes Stubbes and provides: "and if they could as wel chaunge their sex, & put on the kinde of man, as they can weare apparel assigned onely to man, I think they *could* as verely become men indeed."⁶⁷ He then goes on to observe:

What is rarely acknowledged in the period is that both sign systems [language and apparel], given the absence of a biological, essentialist basis for identity are constituted as much as represented. In a culture in which identity is not supposed to be mutable, there is a paradoxical reliance upon outward signs to ensure stable identification. The idea that "performance" is involved in gender identity, to use Judith Butler's recent formulation, could not be articulated precisely because it names what figures like Stubbes anxiously imagine might be the case – hence Stubbes attacks on the Theater for its affective power. (Breitenberg 152).

The slip – and the conclusions that are drawn from it – reveal both the crux of the cross-dressing conundrum and much about Breitenberg's philological objectives. In the original text, Stubbes can clearly be seen to remark that *if* these women *could* assume male sex-identities – if it *were* as simple as donning male clothing – then these women are so brazen (they 'blush not') that they *would*. Because Stubbes chooses a grammatical structure that is employed *only* for highly *improbable* or *impossible* situations, however (the second conditional with a modal 'could' in the 'if' clause), the implication is, of course, that these women *can't* 'put on' male bodies in the same way that they 'put on' male attire; and, consequently, that they are all the more monstrous because they lack *both* masculine anatomy *and* male authority. Like the upstart courtiers who do not possess the *sprezzatura* required to wear sumptuous apparel, they become 'monstrous' parodies of the masculinity that is signified. As in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene* – when Truewitt is obliged to correct himself so as *not to* concede to the collegiate ladies the male status they seek (when they "cry down or up what they like or dislike in a brain or a fashion" he says, it is "with most masculine or rather hermaphroditical authority" that they do so) – Stubbes also seeks here to demonstrate that these women cannot possibly – whatever behaviour or apparel they assume – ever actually *become* male or possess masculine *authority*. Moreover, in context, the passage appears immediately after Stubbes has cited the Deuteronomic code against cross-dressing and instigated precisely the 'biblical language of difference' that Jean Howard and others have recognised as clearly offering a "two-sex gender system."⁶⁸ Breitenberg's substitution of a *could* for a *would* is, then, at worst a clear attempt to insert possibility into a firmly closed grammatical (and rhetorical) structure; at best, a poor 'reading' of the primary text (in both a literal and a metaphorical sense).

Returning to Gascoigne's poem, the biological facticity of facial hair that brings difficulty to Macbeth in assigning sex to the witches with whom he is confronted allows Gascoigne to presume what his women cannot be either. Certainly, the sexual categories that the poet flicks through as a masculine interpreter of strange female objects include men and boys, gods and devils, but he *finally* and *incontrovertibly* alights on *women*. This text thus reveals the tensions between the surface rhetoric of anti-cross-dressing polemics and the reality of what is actually going on in such works. Much has recently been made of observations such as that made by William Harrison "I have met with some of these trulles in London so disguised, that it passed my skille to discerne whether they were men or women,"⁶⁹ but close analysis of the *language* that is employed in such examples consistently reveals a clearly defined and sex-specific set of vocabularies (because in this case, the word 'trull' is glossed by the OED as 'a low prostitute, or concubine; a drab, strumpet, trollop'; its etymology is given in terms of derivation from the German "trulle" or Swiss "trolle" – both of which are feminine nouns bearing the appropriate feminised 'e' endings – and, moreover, the word 'trull' or 'troul' is also used by both Greene, and Chapman and Shirley in the early modern period in decisively *female* contexts).⁷⁰ What is more, Harrison's (feigned) inability to tell whether his cross-dressers are women or men does not in any way comment on the *true nature* of their sex-identity, but simply plays on the fact that he (pretends that he) cannot '*discerne*' what they are.

The appropriation of male attire by women was, then, clearly *not* uniformly seen by men as distressing as a result of a feared literal destabilisation of the male body, but rather by virtue of its disregard of (and challenge to) accepted (gendered) *status* boundaries and signifiers. Moving back to the language of Gascoigne's dedication, then, that the poem should commence with a majuscule 'I' is, in this respect, highly significant. Several scholars have recently shown the way in which Roman Capitals acted in the Renaissance as a site of self-inscription – and how both handwriting and typography were understood to signify authority and gender.⁷¹ As Bianca Calabresi has recently observed: "Renaissance etymologies recognized in the Latin word for head – caput – the roots of the word "capital": hence capital letters were equally associated with heads of states, heads of dynasties and heads of sentences for the early modern reader."⁷² From the medieval period onwards, the capital letter's function as the initiator of a paragraph had become visually linked with an author's ability to initiate a text and 'give birth' to a literary creation; the use of capitals was a profound symbol of regal, authorial and, specifically *male* power (even the usurped power to give birth); both acted, in John Florio's words, as "the beginner of a thing."⁷³ However, as Calabresi has also observed, "in the mid-to-late sixteenth century, the Roman Capital became a graphic sign of authority [that was] increasingly used by subjects previously considered beyond [its] masculine and imperial associations."⁷⁴ In a skilful analysis of the requisition of capital letters to signify appropriations of male authority, Calabresi has shown the ways in which majuscules act as an assertion of female agency and influence in the opening sentence of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet, in the inscription of Aspatia's name on the frontispiece to *The Maid's Tragedy*, and in a 1554 self-portrait of the painter Sophonisba

Anguissola.⁷⁵ As a typographical representative of the self (and as an agent of masculine sociological and authorial control), then, the embellished capital letter ('I') with which Gascoigne opens his work thus takes on a particularly noteworthy position in the figuration of his masculinity; and the phrase with which he begins his work: "I n'am a man" may consequently be seen to reveal a crisis of identity that is based not upon an inversion of his anatomy, but on an uprooting and usurpation of his masculine *authority* (both as the central definition of the human self and as the originator of a major form of cultural production: poetry). Gascoigne's opening thus plays upon serious fears, not about the dissolution of his *body*, but on the deconstruction of patriarchal *authority* – and the plea 'laugh not good Lord' reveals the seriousness with which he wishes his subject to be viewed.

What I want to argue here is that FTM cross-dressing became a deeply disruptive phenomenon because women challenged a social order in which they were oppressed merely by virtue of 'custom' and not, any longer, as a result of 'nature'. As the cross-dressing controversy continued, only notions of 'monstrous inversion' playing on the impure traffic between signifier and signified (or outright devilry) could be deployed against the cross-dressed *hic mulier*. Faced with the fact that her appropriation of a sumptuary signifier did not, *could* not, alter the corporal identity of her body, the only thing that the cleric William Avarell could invoke in 1588 in order to suppress the cross-dressers in his congregation was a figuration of monstrosity. He therefore stated:

though they be in sexe women, yet in attire they appeare to be men, and are like *Androgini*, who counterfayting the shape of either kind, are in deede neither, so while they are in conditiō women, and woulde seeme in apparel men, they are neither Men nor women, but plaine Monsters.⁷⁶

Avarell clearly considers the body beneath the FTM disguise to be consistently female (he says so twice: 'they be in sexe women [...] they are in conditiō women') what is 'monstrous', then, is the misappropriation of a God-given sign in order to confuse and deceive the categorizing gaze of male observers. The subsequent re-definition of *Hic Mulier* as grotesque, as 'other than human' thus deftly renders an anatomically liberated form once again into an object to be feared, mis-trusted and despised precisely because it puts her back 'beyond the pale' that circumscribes conventional, civilised *mankind*. Rather than being accepted as one of two biological variants of the human genus, woman – in her incarnation as *hic mulier* and in her attempt to assert authority – was (ironically) thus moved back into a position of 'otherness' (and therefore inferiority) – an object to be justly restrained, tamed and controlled by men.

In relation to this phenomenon, Jean Howard has noted of the construction of misogynist responses to cross-dressers that:

Such women signal not only the breakdown of the hierarchal gender system, but of the class system as well. The author [of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet] claims them "but ragges of gentry," the adulterate branches of rich Stocks," "all base, all barbarous" [sig. B^f]. The mannish woman [...] threatens the collapse of the entire class system. The very state itself is threatened by her behaviour. The author writes: "if this [cross dressing] bee not

barbarous, make the rude Scithian, the untamed Moore, the naked Indian, or the Wilde Irish Lords and rulers of well governed cities" [sig. B^v] In a stunning revelation of racial and national chauvinism, the aspiration of women beyond their places is associated with the monstrous notion of the black in rulership over the white, the Irish over the English.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, the language of difference that Howard picks up on here in terms of class and race can also be used to reinforce the notion of an emergence of essential *sexual* difference that I wish to posit. The word 'barbarous' (used twice in this short passage) is glossed by the OED as: "[L. barbarus Gr. βαρβαρος] In ancient times, 'foreign, non-Hellenic' later 'outlandish, rude, brutal. With the Romans, 'not Latin or Greek' then pertaining to those outside the Roman Empire, hence 'uncivilised, uncultured and later 'non-Christian' whence 'Saracen, heathen and generally 'savage, rude.'" The passage from *Hic Mulier* that Howard finds so interesting can therefore be seen to rely, in its essence, on notions of alterity and 'otherness' (and threats to a defined, normative order) rather than an anatomical imperfection that was attempting to transform into something more perfect. Such language is as applicable to the discovery (and immediate attempt at subordination) of a sexual other, as it is a racial one. It was a (racist) commonplace of the Renaissance that one could not wash an Ethiop white; as we have seen in Renaissance anatomy, too, it was also becoming clear that one could not 'transform' a woman into a man.

V

I want now to turn specifically to the performative and theatrical nature of transvestism; first in an analysis of the cross-dressed woman's body as a locus of polyvalent erotic speculation (a site that Peter Stallybrass has – in relation to the boy actor – recently termed "the point of intersection between spectatorship, the specular and the speculative")⁷⁸ and, subsequently, in relation to one specific cultural spectacle that may have significantly influenced the phenomenon: the court masque.

In a collection of satirical epigrams written in 1606, the poet Henry Parrot includes a quatrain that, in contrast to Avarell's unequivocal rejection of a 'monstrous other', begins to toy with the *erotic* possibilities of the dual-sexed body. Playing with the obvious mileage that was to be made from classical paradigms of androgyny, Parrot constructs an image of the female cross-dresser that is a 'best-of-both-worlds' fantasy of discretely partitioned eroticism. He observes:

This makes *Menalcus* muse above the rest.
To see how quaint my Lady is adrest:
For from the girdle upwards (durst he sweare,) She doth the very shape of man appear.⁷⁹

The transvestite presented here is, once again, quite clearly female (she only 'appears' to have the 'shape' of man); she is also a figure of significant social standing (a 'Lady' rather than a 'mistress' or 'madam'). What is most striking about the passage, however, is the fact that Parrot's

cross-dressed body is presented as being neatly divided into two discrete halves. Unlike Avarell, Parrot does not invoke monstrosity, but instead articulates a 'quaint' notion of separation (and a containment of two distinct 'shapes' within this woman's lower and upper bodies); he therefore maximises upon the opportunity for simultaneous homo- and hetero-erotic male fantasy that such an object affords. However (and despite Parrot's emphasis on this woman's nature as the *object* of male desire), this is a fantasy in which *hic mulier* may also be seen to attempt to use her female anatomy as a means of interrogating certain key suppositions about gender relations.

In Parrot's poem, the FTM transvestite body is a locus of speculation; it is a site in which the male observer may choose to focus either on the erotic masculine (and semiotic) appearance of her torso, or on the procreative feminine (and anatomical) possibilities of her lower body; yet, because *hic mulier's* doublet and ruff create only a transient sense of masculinity (in that they cannot convincingly conceal her breasts for long – especially if her doublet is open), the actual effect of this dichotomy is to force the observer into a kind of 'moral vertigo' and to coerce him into a *comparison* of what a doublet *should* contain, set against what this one actually does. In other words, *hic mulier* seems to here to want to induce a metaphorical stripping away of her clothing in order to bring about a consideration of the actual anatomical *differences* between her body and that of a man. Moreover, since doublets and ruffs are located on (or near) parts of the body that are generally associated with agency (the arms, hands, head and mouth), and because the very act of appropriating such signifiers is clearly assertive, a situation is created in which – as the FTM cross-dressed body is mentally decorticated by its observer and its masculine signifiers are stripped away in the beholder's mind's eye in order to reveal the essential nature of femininity that lies beneath – instead of *upholding* an innate sense of female *inferiority*, the question is inevitably raised as to whether men *should* be the only ones who have the right to dress and act as they wish. Despite *hic mulier's* torso stubbornly (and inevitably) remaining feminine, then (and regardless of her role as the *object* of the male gaze), this woman has actually *empowered* herself (and challenged the male gaze) as a result of the more complex processes of gender analysis (and categorisation) that she has insisted be carried out. Put another way: as a result of her appropriation of selected masculine signifiers, the taxonomies of gender through which early modern society traditionally categorised women have been subtly interrogated.

Unfortunately, however (and precisely *because* this process requires *male* clothing to be stripped away from a *female* body), this dynamic is also unavoidably problematised by the (almost inevitable) *erotic* valences that emerge in the (all too sexually focussed) male mind. In much of the defamatory polemical criticism that decries women who appropriate male attire, then, this subtle moment of realisation (what I would argue to have been the primary intention of *hic mulier*) is therefore deliberately elided. Perhaps it was not seen at all (and much of the interplay between anatomy and authority is therefore deliberately obfuscated). In their desire to encourage women simply to cover up what 'should not be seen' (with appropriately feminine clothing) anti-

cross-dressing polemicists clearly refused to engage with (or did not pick up on) the interrogation of suppositions about gender (and power) that *hic mulier* clearly wanted. Instead, polemicists regularly sought to *abrogate* female agency and to attribute a purely (hetero)sexual incontinence to the cross-dressed women whom they sought to condemn. According to the anonymous author of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet, FTM cross-dressers were rendered simply:

the perfumed carrion that bad men feed on in brothels [... with] bodies like antique boscadge, or crotescow worke, not half man, halfe woman; half filth, half flesh; half beaste, half monster; but all odious, all Divell, that have cast off the ornaments of [their] sexe, to put on the garments of shame; that have laid by the bashfulness of [their] natures, to gather the impudence of harlots [...] that are all things but that which [they] be.⁸⁰

Despite her best intentions, then, the venom of such attacks makes two things clear: (i) that behind anti-cross-dressing rhetoric lay the fear that many men actually saw *hic mulier* as desirable precisely *because* she resonated with a decidedly homo-erotic allure; and that (ii) instead of problematising received taxonomies of gender, such women inadvertently problematised some of the basic assumptions of *heterosexuality*. As Mark Breitenberg has astutely noted:

What is most threatening, most potentially subversive, about the dissolution of gender difference brought on by cross-dressing women is their confusion and confutation of male desire. This claim is based on the inseparability of desire and identity: to know clearly what and who one wants is to know who one is [...] The anxious response to the confusing of this model by the cross-dressing woman or androgen is to invoke the category of monstrosity in order to avoid acknowledging one's own ambiguous desire (Breitenberg 160).

As a consequence, then, although the author of *Hic Mulier* first attempts to undermine her critique of gender hierarchies and attempts to pin the cross-dressed woman down in uniquely heterosexual terms, he fails abysmally. When he accuses FTM cross-dressers of exchanging 'modest' female weeds for the more 'open' apparel of their male counterparts this author claims that *hic mulier's* motivation is simply the fact that such masculine attire allows easier access for tactile caresses and heterosexual sex, and that these women are therefore guilty of:

exchanging the modest attire of the comely Hood, Cowle, Coyte, handsome Dresse or Kercheif, to the cloudy ruffianly broad brimmed-hat, and wanton feather, the modest upper parts of a concealing straight gowne, to the loose lascivious open embracement of a French dublet, being all buttoned to entyce, all of one shape to hide deformitie, and extreme short wasted to give a most easy way to every luxurious action [...] ⁸¹

yet, if a man's doublet is much easier to get inside than a woman's dress, and a woman's body (once encased within one) is seen as *more* erotically charged and alluring than it is in her own female raiment, does not such a conclusion inevitably also contain a possibility (perhaps inevitability) that male garments might perform the *same* erotic function when they are worn by men? In the light of such a possibility, the *Hic Mulier* author recoils from his first line of argument and is therefore obliged to fall back on evocations of 'fiendishness'. In an attempt to avoid the homoerotic element that emerges from a sexual (rather than a sociological) interpretation of

female cross-dressing, he is forced to assert that both *hic mulier's* body and her soul have been allotted to Satan:

Shee that hath given two kisses to have her haire shorne, will give her honestie to have her upper parts put into a French doublet: To conclude, she that will give her body to have her bodie deformed, will not sticke to give her soule to have her mind satisfied.⁸²

Throughout the pamphlet, the homo-erotic constituent of male desire for these women (that the author is so at pains to conceal) is therefore repeatedly shown up in his assertions that despite (indeed *because of*) the fact these women are supposed to be in every way masculine they are particularly alluring objects, and are clearly able to entice men beyond observation, into lascivious action. We therefore read that, although they are “man in body by attire, man in behaviour by rude compliment, man in nature by aptnesse to anger, man in action by persuing revenge, man in wearing weapons, man in using weapons”, the writer still urges them to “keep those parts concealed from the eyes, that may not bee touched with the hands” so as not to “let not a wandering and lascivious thought read in an intising index the contents of an unchaste volume.”⁸³

Anti-cross-dressing polemics were undoubtedly written as much for the moral instruction of the men who (somewhat missing the point) found transvestite women attractive as they were for the women who engaged in the phenomenon. The rhetorical strategies that they employ are therefore mediated through both evocations of ‘monstrous’ and ‘fiendish’ ‘androgyny’ (so as to counter the homo-erotic desires of male observers) and accusations of loose whoredom (in order to avoid facing up to the challenges to gender relations that these women evidently sought to make). As shall be seen in chapter four, such recuperative rhetoric was not exclusive to polemical attacks; it can be repeatedly witnessed (albeit in more nuanced forms) in representations of FTM cross-dressers in dramatic literature; but before I move on to my next chapter – and to an analysis of two dramatic incarnations of *hic mulier* – I want to turn to one last possible sphere of influence for her.

In *The Cuckow*, a poem of 1607, Richard Niccols depicts the descent from a firmament of a sensuous woman, Meehafasto, whom he describes as “gaudie in attire.”⁸⁴ Next, in an extensive passage that makes use of rather piquant eroticism, he observes:

Loosely she was aray'd in wanton weed
Which wanderers eies did with enticement feed,
For she was clad in robe of tissue thinne,
Through which so brim appear'd her snowie skin,
That it did seem to those that did it see,
No whit obscur'd, but farre more white to bee,
Her Ivorie breasts did ever open lie
To readie spoile of gazers greedie eie,
And both her lillie paps were bare to winne
Her lovers melting heart to wanton sinne;⁸⁵

Niccols' description certainly eroticises this woman (yet again[!]), but what is far more striking to me about this passage is the resemblance that Meehafasto – and the other female characters of the poem – bear to the costumes and stage-practices of the Stuart masque (and, in particular, to the costumes designed by Inigo Jones for the *Masque of Blackness*, *Hymenaei* and the *Masque of Queens* – see illustrations below).⁸⁶ Niccols' language seems to replicate the process of one particular moment in the court masque uncannily: his figures descend from a firmament of stars (such as those in the heavens of imported Italianate stage-settings designed for the Stuart Court by Inigo Jones) and they replicate the way that masquers descended from their temporary stage (and its machinery) at the end of the masque proper in order to take part in the 'measures and revels' with the wider court below.

What is more, the diaphanous clothing that is described by Niccols is extraordinarily close to that of the costumes that were designed for Queen Anne and the ladies of her coterie in their personation of Queens Berenice, Atlanta and Artemisia (in *The Masque of Queens*) or those that had been used for 'torchbearers' and 'winged masquers' (in *The Masque of Blackness*) some four years earlier – costumes that Dudley Carlton had described as "rich, but too light and curtisan-like."⁸⁷

Moreover, according to Niccols, this seductive figure is accompanied (as well as by women described variously as 'nymphes' and 'angels') by one distinctly Amazonian threat to male authority:

With her there hither came a goodly crew
Of lovely Nymphes of Seeming Angels hue
Featur'd each where in bodies lineament,
As if they late had left the firmament,
Or as if heavens divine triplicite,
For there complexions hue had framed some mixture,
Passing the homely gift of common nature.
But pitie 'twas, such angell seeming creatures
With ulcerous minds deform'd such heavenly features
For they were wanton, full of loose desire
And in their heart did nourish lustfull fire ...
They all acoutered were in sundrie fashion,
Seeming t'have been all of several nation,
Some in the antique Roman Lords attire
Did shape themselves as seeming to aspire
Some captaines place, or as if they had been
Symiramis, that manlike monster queene [...] ⁸⁸

In *The Masque of Queens* (that was presented in the second Whitehall Banqueting House on February 2, 1609) Lucy Harington-Russel danced the role of Penthesileia, Queen of the Amazons – a figure not infrequently mentioned in the same breath as Niccols' choice of Semiramis.⁸⁹ As may be seen from the selection of *Queens* costumes below (and particularly from that of Penthesileia) 'antique Roman Lords attire' (with its muscular, torso-hugging armour) has been transformed (like Niccols' 'robe of tissue thin') in Jones' costume designs into diaphanous gauze – as the ladies of Anne's court quite literally 'shape themselves as seeming to



Figure 5

Costume for Penthesileia, danced by Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford, in *The Masque of Queens* (1609)



Figure 6

Costume for Berenice, danced by Lady Anne Clifford, Later of Countess of Dorset, in *The Masque of Queens* (1609)



Figure 7

Costume for an Un-named Queen, dancer unknown, *The Masque of Queens* (1609)



Figure 8

Costume for Atalanta, danced by Alatheia Talbot, Countess of Arundel, in *The Masque of Queens* (1609)

aspire / Some captaines place.' Niccols astonishingly also concludes his evocation of descending wanton-women and Amazons with the following quatrain:

In Persian loose array, some did delight,
Or rather disaray, so loosely tight,
In the French doublet some againe did let
Wanting but slops to make a man compleat [...] ⁹⁰

therefore setting *hic mulier* in pride of place amongst these women so like contemporary masquers.

Clare McManus has recently posited the notion that female masquing was "an active cultural force which, although open to a very few women during the Jacobean reign, had an impact on what is usually designated mainstream culture." ⁹¹ In her analysis of *The Masque of Queens*, she has therefore focussed on the ways in which the female masquer's body was placed (both conceptually and structurally) at the centre of performance and has observed: "Essentially ocular and literally visionary, *Queens* centres around the spectacle of the female body as it is exposed to King James' interpretative gaze."⁹² Of the costumes employed by Anne and her Ladies, she states:

in [...] important ways, these costumes are extremely transgressive, since they cross established gender boundaries. The most obvious example of this is the design for Penthesileia, and the blurring of gender boundaries here is evident in the accessories which Lucy Harington Russell carried when she danced this role, and in the obvious Amazonian nature of the personation. Above and beyond these much noted features, however, costume, and this costume in particular, acts as a kind of bodily scenery that sets up the body for scrutiny. A brief glance at this design shows that this costume emphasises the biological certainty of Russell's sex in the display of her exposed breasts. The pattern is repeated throughout most of the costumes of *Queens*, even those which do not directly expose the breasts emphasise their presence ⁹³

McManus uses this fact to demonstrate how the actual female stage-body is emphatically differentiated from that of the transvestite boy-actor (as one element in a complex system of differentiation that separates elite masquing from common acting) or, as Elizabeth Schaffer has put it, that: 'exposed breasts were one performative element that women on stage could definitely do better than boys'.⁹⁴

I want, however, to dwell on another significance of such masque costuming. The attire designed by Jones (and presumably on the instructions of Queen Anne) is curiously at odds with conventional representations of the Amazon. In mythology, in literature and in artistic representations, Amazons were understood to have *compromised* their female anatomy for the sake of defining themselves as warrior women; they cut off one of their breasts in order to be able to draw their longbows in battle. The representation of the Amazon that Lucy Harington-Russell offers her audience in *The Masque of Queens*, however (in contrast to representations of the Amazon as recent as that of Elizabeth at Tilbury, in a Dutch engraving of 1598, or in her 1588 Armada portrait), is – for some reason – one of female anatomical *perfection*.⁹⁵ The *Masque Of Queens*' representation of Homer's Queen, Penthesileia, is therefore one that is

anatomically perfect and complete; both of Lucy Harington-Russell's breasts are revealed to the male gaze – and attention is accordingly drawn to a potent symbol of feminine authority in which female *anatomy* has neither compromised itself nor has it attempted to render itself male. Power is not presented in exclusively masculine terms in this image, but through the ostensive display of female agency as it is mediated through a manifestation of anatomical femininity. So, could the *hic mulier* sensation have been derived from (or at least encouraged by) the court? Were the ladies of Anne of Denmark's coterie actively inviting the interpretative male gaze as a means of interrogating certain fundamental classifications of gender – and basing their critique of gender relations on an interplay between female agency and anatomy?

Well, on the twenty-second of February 1619, in a sermon preached before the King and court by the royal chaplain (and bishop of York, Dr. John Williams) we find a possible answer. In a robust invective, Williams chose female transvestism as his subject matter and warned against the current male ocular preoccupation with cross-dressed women. He informed his congregation that – since God had initially divided the androgen of Genesis into two different forms – the new blurrings of sex that arose as a result of FTM transvestism were the injurious exertions of the devil:

he [God] had divided male and female [...] the devill hath ioyned them, that *mulier formosa*, is now become *mulier monstrosa superne*, halfe man halfe woman, all (outwardly) of her *new maker* [the devil], and these are the creatures we goe out to see.⁹⁶

There is nothing new about Williams' rhetoric here however; it constitutes (as it picks up from) an orthodox attempt to pen *hic mulier* in as a 'monstrous other' – the satanic implant who has been sent to destabilise the discretely gendered ontology of divine creation. As this cleric's invective continued to ring out against the sin pride and the vanity of excessive apparel, however, Williams staggeringly cited a significant biblical excuse for any sumptuary excesses in which the court themselves might indulge (Matthew Chapter 2 verse 8: "What went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, thay that beare soft clothing are in King's houses"). Subsequently, tackling the inappropriate nature of the sort of homo-erotic desire that is stirred up by cross-dressed women (and taking care to point out that *hic mulier* should *not* be gazed upon), the cleric complained that the yearning to observe these women was so strong that it existed not only amongst the frequenters of riotous places (such as taverns and theatres), but (apparently) even in places of Christian devotion.

Williams startlingly informed his congregation that even churches were not places exempt from the cross-dressed woman. According to this sermon, for men not to be attracted to such women required almost super-human effort, because:

suppose the people were so attentive so as not to regard this vanity of *Men*, what flesh and blood hath his thoughts so staunch, but must be distracted in his Church devotions, at the *prodigious* apparition of our women? *Monstrum à monstrando* [...] For a woman therefore to come unto a Church, *Chimera-like* [...] halfe male, and halfe female [...] ⁹⁷

In her all too familiar garb, *Hic Mulier* is described within the house of God, and come:

to protest amendment and newness of life. But how? As standing most manly upon her *points*, by wagging a *Feather* to defie the *World* and carrying a *dagger* to kill (no doubt) the *flesh* and the *devill*.⁹⁸

It is a perplexing coincidence, especially considering that Williams had before him (in the female members of the court) the very women who in their daily fashions, their hunting garb and especially their incarnations as masquers engaged in the phenomenon of FTM cross-dressing themselves.

As I close, I would like to draw attention to the fact that such notions of dissemination from the 'top' down are further augmented when satirical accounts of the heterogeneous audiences of private theatres are taken into consideration. In Henry Fitzgeffrey's 1617 satire, *Certaine Observations at Black-Fryers*, a strong link between one FTM transvestite and the 'Gallants' of the private theatre audience is implied as the author observes:

Now Mars defend us! Seest thou who comes yonder?
 Monstrous! A *Woman* of the *masculine Gender*
 Look! thou mayst well descry her by her groath,
 Out, point not man! Lest we be beaten both.
 Eye her a little, marke but where shee'l goe,
 Now (by this hand) into the Gallants Roe.
 Let her alone! What ere she gives to stand,
 Shee'l make her self a gayner, *By the Hand*.

The O.E.D. glosses the word 'gallant' as 'Suited to fashionable society; indulging in social gaiety or display; attractive in manners, polished, *courtier-like* [...] 'Noble', stately [...] 'Chivalrously brave, full of *noble* daring [my italics].' The connection between this sexually charged, cunning (and possibly erotically violent) cross-dressed woman and the 'gallants' of the Jacobean court is therefore possible further evidence of her popularity in the circles of society who mingled (or at the very least *aspired* to mingle) with a royal elite.

In short, then, *hic mulier* was a multifarious and complex entity; and it is doubtless true that there were as many reasons for her appropriation of masculine apparel as there were women engaging in the phenomenon. What would seem clear, however, as one surveys the literature surrounding these figures, is that there appear to have been discrete and class-specific *degrees* of engagement with the vogue for female transvestism as it took its hold on London at the close of the sixteenth century. Whether undertaken in recognition of the power attained by Queen Elizabeth's gender neutral (or masculinised) self-descriptions, or her visual representations as an Amazon; or as a respectful emulation of the (ostensibly anatomical) cultural agency of Queen Anne's court; whether it was a fashion-conscious appropriation of courtly apparel that filtered down to an emergent bourgeoisie; or simply a desire to affirm equality and independence by more 'common' sorts – the trend for FTM cross-dressing unquestionably met with a diversity of anxious responses from the men who frustratedly attempted to categorise and classify such 'problematic' women.

Despite attempts to pigeonhole and subordinate female transvestites by defining them as 'monstrous others' (as did the polemicists and theologians) or as flamboyant and available erotic fantasies (as did the coterie poets), historians and critics alike must certainly acknowledge that many of these women sought less to gratify *men* (with utopian claims to a polyvalent and androgynous eroticism) than they did to gain the immediate enjoyment of political *authority*, artistic *freedom* – or access to professional activities, to *capital* and to the *status* that was socially unavailable to them as women. The fact that many men perceived *hic mulier* as a creature with a supposed free-floating sexuality, capable of satisfying the desires of either (or both) sexes (and that they therefore toyed with her as an erotic object to be mastered and tamed) is, I would argue, an unintentional and unwanted consequence of female attempts to gain freedom from (and certainly to challenge) patriarchal authority.

It was not these cross-dressers' intention to become sex-symbols and it is therefore ironic (yet, regrettably, entirely predictable) that male responses to *hic mulier* centred around homo and hetero-erotic male desires rather than an acknowledgment of their anatomical integrity and recognition that women were becoming a major social and economic force within proto-capitalist society.

As Jean Howard has argued, the treatment of cross-dressed women in early seventeenth-century literature – and particularly in plays – is a complex one:

Many cross-dressing plays are intensely preoccupied with threats to the gender system. Collectively, they play a role in producing and managing anxieties about 'women on top' women who are not "in their proper places," but are gadding, gossiping and engaging – it is assumed – in extra marital sex, and in managing the anxieties about the fragility of male authority.⁹⁹

It is to such questions that I am going to turn in my next chapter as I analyse some of the strategies of recuperation that were used to steer such figures back into the patriarchal fold. Although it is perhaps a little disheartening to finish up with what is perhaps the most misogynistic of the anti cross-dressing polemicists, I will conclude this chapter with some rather provocative words from the anonymous author of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet.

The tract, in many ways, represents the culmination of conservative responses to *hic mulier's* assertion of female agency; yet it also hints at the fact that the patriarchs had perhaps rumbled that their number was up – that they knew they were powerless to halt certain women's desires to dress and act as they wished. Invoking the biblical language of divine and eternal authority, *Hic Mulier* observes of self-assured and confident women that "they were, are, and will be still [...]"¹⁰⁰

Notes to Chapter III:

¹ Thomas Platter, *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599*, translated by Clare Williams (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), pp. 181 – 82.

² Thomas Adams, *Mystical Bedlam or the World of Mad-Men* (London, 1615), p. 50.

³ For a good survey of the development of sumptuary legislation in the period see Reed Benhamou, 'The restraint of excessive apparel: England 1337 – 1604', *Dress* Volume 15 (1989), pp. 27 – 37. The Subject is also dealt with in Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 155 – 169. For an emphasis on the gendered implications of this legislation, see also Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983), especially chapter 5: 'Make thy doublet of changeable taffeta': Dress Codes, Sumptuary Law and 'Natural' Order', pp. 141 – 168.

⁴ The attempt at social control failed, of course. Of the Tudor Statutes, 1 Henry VIII (1510) was repealed in 1515; 6 Henry VIII (1514) in 1515; 7 Henry VIII (1515) in 1533; 24 Henry VIII (1533) in 1604; 1 & 2 Phillip and Mary (1554) in 1604; and 13 Elizabeth (1571) in 1597.

⁵ The degrees of FTM transvestism that were undertaken did, of course, range greatly. Instances of cross-dressing varied from the full appropriation of male clothing (as used for disguise purposes in several extraordinary escape plans) to the commandeering of certain, more limited, signifiers of masculinity (such as a doublet, breeches, feathered hats and so on). These latter instances will be dealt with later in this chapter.

⁶ See Alison Findlay, 'I Please Myself': Female Self-Fashioning', in *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama* (Malden, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1999). Findlay argues in this chapter that there existed (in the liberties of London and particularly in the theatre) a special opportunity for pleasurable pastimes in which gender conventions could be challenged. In her insightful analysis, Findlay asserts that the histrionic representations of femininity that were afforded on stage (in which women sometimes cross-dressed and were occasionally even seen to control their own destiny) were at odds with the 'ideal woman' as set out in conduct books; she also observes, however, that theatrical manifestations of such behaviour 'may have given women spectators a sense of cathartic release as passions are brought safely out into the open'. See Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective*, p. 94.

⁷ David Kuchta, 'The Semiotics of Masculinity in Renaissance England', in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern England*, edited by James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 234.

⁸ An example of which being Sir Amorous La Foole in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*.

La Foole is proud of his (invented) family colours of 'azure' and 'gules' (despite the fact that they are the motley colours of a court jester). La Foole also arrogantly (and inappropriately) wears his 'gold jerkin' (a colour that was reserved for the rank of Earls and above, and then only on special occasions) around his country tenancies (see Ben Jonson, *Epicoene*, edited by R.V. Holdsworth (London: Ernest Benn, 1979), Act I scene iv and especially lines 34 – 62).

Sir Amorous is clearly 'new money' (although he somewhat ironically lacks any, and therefore has to 'take up' credit in order to woo ladies). Moreover, to augment his folly, Jonson has La Foole claim to have been recently knighted by the Earl of Essex (who was reputed to have sold off a preposterous number of honours) and is therefore pitilessly mocked as a result of his *parvenu* status. In short, La Foole knows nothing of sumptuary regulation, nor of the notion of *sprezzatura* (see note 9 below) that was required for the wearer of sumptuous apparel *not* to appear ridiculous (despite his hilarious attempts to prove the contrary in the virtuoso speech cited above).

⁹ *Sprezzatura* was the name given (by Italian courtesy writer Baldassare Castiglione) to the naturalness and nonchalance needed for a man to feel at home in the sumptuous trappings of high station.

The notion that outward beauty was a true sign of inward goodness (and that only a noble soul could carry off the wearing of splendid apparel) was first articulated in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (that was translated into English by Tomas Hoby in 1561). Other English writers who were influenced by Italian courtesy rhetoric include Henry Peachum, Thomas Elyot, Francis Bacon, Francis Osborne, William Higford, and the anonymous author of *The English Courtier*. For an excellent account of the relation of suitable apparel to the appearance of masculinity in early modern English Society, see Kuchta, *Semiotics of Masculinity*.

¹⁰ See, most interestingly, Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

¹¹ William Avarell, *A Mervallous Combat of Contrarleties* (London, 1588), Sig. B1^r/v.

¹² A Proclamation of Apparell (the decree of the Privy Council at Westminster, 20th October, 1559). *Queene Elizabeth's Proclamations 1559 – 1602 Collected by Humphrey Dyson, Clerk of Parliament* (London, 1618), number 13. Hereafter *Proclamations*.

¹³ For a selective reproduction of this legislation, see Jardine, *Still Harping*, pp. 143 – 4.

¹⁴ *Proclamations*. 47. My Italics.

¹⁵ *Proclamations*. 50. My Italics.

¹⁶ Jardine, *Still Harping*, pp. 149 – 151.

¹⁷ Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, translated by Tomas Hoby (1561; reprint New York, 1907), p. 347. Cited in Kuchta, *Semiotics of Masculinity*, p. 235.

¹⁸ Barnabe Barnes, *Foure Bookes of Offices: Enabling Privat [sic] Persons for the Special Service of all Good Princes and Policies* (London, 1606), p. 15. Also quoted in Kuchta, *Semiotics of Masculinity*, p. 235.

¹⁹ Kuchta, *Semiotics of Masculinity*, p. 235.

²⁰ Kuchta, *Semiotics of Masculinity*, first section: p. 236, second section: p. 239. The quotation from Giovanni della Casa refers to *Galateo*, translated by Konrad Eisenbichler and Kenneth R. Bartlett (Toronto, 1986), pp. 53 – 54. The text first appeared in Venice in 1558.

²¹ Henry Peacham, *The Worth of a Penny* (London, 1669), p. 51. My Italics. The passage is quoted in Kuchta, *Semiotics of Masculinity*, p. 238. The text first appeared in 1647.

²² For an astute reading of the symbolism of Gheeraerts' portrait of Captain Thomas Lee, see Karen Hearn (ed.), *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England* (London: Tate Publishing, 1995), p. 176.

²³ My analysis of the symbolism of the Hilliard portrait is based largely upon an analysis undertaken by Anne Thackray, in Hearn (ed.), *Dynasties*, p. 126 – 27.

²⁴ William Rankins, *Seven Satires*, edited by A. Davenport (London, 1948), p. 5. The first edition of this work was published in London in 1598.

²⁵ Kuchta, *Semiotics of Masculinity*, p. 238

²⁶ *Proclamations*. 47.

²⁷ *Proclamations*. 48.

²⁸ *Proclamations*. 49.

²⁹ The lack of legislative intervention may be seen to be demonstrated in what Jean Howard has described as the most misogynistic of the attacks on female transvestism (the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet) in which the anonymous author implores:

Let but the powerful Statute of apparell but lift vp his Battle-Axe, and crush the offenders in pieces, so as every one may bee knowne by the true badge of their bloud, or Fortune: and then these *Chymera's* [sic] of deformitie will bee sent backe to hell, and there burne to Cynders in the flames of their own malice [...]

Anon, *Hic Mulier or the Man-Woman* (London: John Trundle, 1620), sig. C1^r.

The actual power of the 'mighty statute of apparel' was, of course negligible. As I have indicated above, following the repeal of sumptuary legislation in 1604, the regulatory framework was clearly in a state of disarray by 1620, and the laws were never resuscitated.

³⁰ Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. B1^v/B2^r.

³¹ By 1620, boundaries of gender and dress had become so eroded in London that James, normally reticent in controlling the gender experiments of his subjects, felt the need to instruct that sermons publicly addressed the issue as a matter of priority. On the twenty-fourth of January, the Bishop of London therefore:

called together all his clergie about this town and told them he had expresse commaundement from the King to will them to inveigh vehmently and bitterly in theyre sermons, against the insolencie of our women, and theyre wearing of brode brimd hats, pointed dublets, theyre haire cut short or shorne, and some of them stilleetaes or poinards, and such other trinckets of like moment; adding that yf pulpit admonitions will nor reforme them he wold proceed by another course [...]

John Chamberlain, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, edited by Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939), Vol. II., p. 286/7 (a letter of 25th January, 1620).

One month later, Chamberlain noted that the cultural mechanics for policing the phenomenon of cross-dressing had increased, and observed:

Our pulpits ring continually of the insolence and impudence of women: and to helpe the matter forward the players have likewise taken them to taske, and so to all the ballades and ballad singers, so that they can come no-where but theyre eares tingle, and yf this will not serve, the King threatens to fall upon theyre husbands or frends that have or shold have power over them and make them paye for yt.

Nevertheless, it is evident that all such measures were seen as empty threats, ringing from the mouths of somewhat disempowered priests, players and patriarchs. Indeed, such admonitions seemed to have little or no effect on the women who attired themselves in the new FTM fashions since, in the same letter, Chamberlain concludes:

the truth is the world is very far out of order, but whether this will mend yt God knowes

Chamberlain, *Letters of John Chamberlain*, Vol. II., p. 289 (a letter of 12th February 1620).

³² Eloquent accounts of the function of clothing and female agency in the disruption and interrogation of gender relations during the late Renaissance have recently been provided by several scholars. See, for example, Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Methuen, 1995), pp. 129 – 221; Karen Newman, *Fashioning Femininity and Early Modern English Drama* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), pp. 40 – 41; and Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 102.

³³ For a distinguished scholarly discussion of such cases, see R. Dekker, & L. Van Der Pol, *The Tradition of Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

One of the most 'rollicking and swashbuckling' examples of this phenomenon (according to the *Los Angeles Times* at least) is to be found in Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, translated by Michelle Stepto and Gabriel Stepto (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). Arguably one of the earliest known autobiographies by a woman, de Erauso's pamphlet tells the tale of how, in 1599, she escaped from a Basque convent dressed as a man, and then went on to pass as a soldier in the Spanish army, travel to Peru and Chile, become a professional gambler and even to kill her own brother in a duel.

³⁴ R. Mark Benbow and Alisdair D. K. Hawkyard have compiled a list of legal records of such instances of cross-dressing in London from the Repertories of The Alderman's Court and the Minute Books of Bridewell Hospital. Their findings are published as Appendix C in Michael Shapiro, *Gender in Play on the Renaissance Stage* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 225 – 234.

³⁵ In the Shakespearean canon, Portia's appropriation of masculine attire in *The Merchant of Venice* is most definitely within the realms of sub-plot, as is Julia's in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The instances of Rosalind (*As You Like It*) and Viola (*Twelfth Night*) are, of course, far more prominent – and much more is therefore made by Shakespeare of the erotic possibilities that are afforded to his cross-dressed heroines as a result of their disguises (not to mention the mileage that has been made of this comic feature by gender-based criticism of the late 20th century).

I would like to stress here, however, the fact that (largely due to their recuperative nature) *all* of Shakespeare's more sustained FTM cross-dressing narratives operate within the rather constrictive realms of sub-plot (and sub-plots that are nearly always outlined as transitory, and belonging to the unregulated fantasy-world of 'holiday humour').

This is especially evident when Shakespearean figurations of transvestism are compared to the central narrative significance of cross-dressing as a *political statement* in a play such as Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (based as it is in contemporary London). For an excellent discussion of this latter phenomenon, see Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) Chapter 5: 'Power and Eros', especially pp. 93 – 128.

³⁶ This notion is articulated in Janel Mueller, *Virtue and Virtuality: Gender in the Self-Representations of Queen Elizabeth I* (unpublished MS. A lecture to the English Department of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, May 1998).

³⁷ The quotation is from Sir Robert Cecil's 1603 letter to Sir John Harrington and is reproduced in *Nugae Antiquae: Being a Miscellaneous Collection of Original Papers [...] by Sir John Harrington and Others*, edited by Thomas Park (London: J. Wright, 1804), p. 345.

³⁸ Leah Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1988), p. 53.

³⁹ The Pamphlet *Haec Vir* makes this trickle-down effect from the court to the streets London clear.

The work starts with the meeting of two characters (*Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir*). Each one initially perceives their collocutor to be of the sex that is indicated by their apparel. It is later revealed, however, in the pamphlet's satirical *dénouement*, that both are in fact talking to cross-dressed members of their own sex.

What is most interesting to me in this comical opening, however, is the insistence that is placed on *courtly* etiquette (and particularly on notions of 'service'); and therefore on the *high status* of each speaker (as either a 'Knight' or a 'Lady').

I quote the opening section (until the moment of realisation) in its entirety:

Haec Vir: Most redoubted and worthy sir (for less than a knight I cannot take you) you are most happily given unto mine embrace.

Hic Mulier: Is she mad? Or doth she mock mee? Most rare and excellent lady, I am the servant of your virtues, and desire to be employed in your service.

Haec Vir: Pitie of patience, what doth he behold in me, to take me for a woman? Valient and magnanimous sir, I shal desire to build the tower of my fortune upon no stronger foundation then the benefit of your grace and favour.

Hic Mulier: O! Proud ever to be your servant.

Haec Vir: No, the servant of your servant.

Hic Mulier: The tythe of your friendship (good lady) is above my merit.

Haec Vir: You make me rich beyond expression, but faire knight, the truth is I am a man, and desire but the obligation of your friendship.

Hic Mulier: It is ready to be to be sealed and delivered to your use. Yet I would have you understand I am a woman.

Haec Vir: Are you a woman?

Hic Mulier: Are you a man? O Juno Lucina help me.

Haec Vir: Yes I am

Anon, *Haec Vir: or the Womanish Man: Being an Answer to a late Booke intituled Hic Muller* (London: John Trundle, 1620), sig. A3^r/A3^v.

⁴⁰ See Dymrna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), especially the introduction, pp. 1 – 25.

⁴¹ Anon, *Muld Sacke: or the Apologie of Hic Mulier* (London, 1620), sig. Bi^r. My italics.

⁴² See Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), especially Chapter 5: 'Inscriptions of Difference: Cross-dressing, androgyny and the anatomical imperative', pp. 150 – 174.

Breitenberg is generally perceptive in his analysis of the 'crisis of masculinity' that arose as a result of female appropriations of masculine attire; however, since he doggedly sticks to a Laqueurean 'one-sex' model in his explanation of the 'anatomical imperative', this sometimes leads him into a rhetorical *cul-de-sac* (as with his evaluation of the representation of female genitalia in Shakespeare's *Sonnet 20*).

⁴³ Full bibliographical details for the works cited here are as follows: Joseph Swetnam, *The Arraignment of Lewd, Idle and Inconstant Women* (London, 1615); Jacques Olivier, *L'Alphabet de l'Imperfection et Malice des Femmes* (Paris, 1617); de L'Escale, *Le Champion des Femmes* (Paris, 1618); Rachel Speght, *A Mouzell for Melastomus* (London, 1617); Constantina Munda [pseudonym] *The Worming of a Mad Dogge* (London, 1617); and Esther Sowernam [pseudonym], *Esther Hath Hanged Haman* (London, 1617).

Two good modern collected editions of these primary texts are available: Simon Shepherd (ed.) *The Woman's Sharp Revenge: Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1985); and Barbara F. Mc Manus and K. Usher Henderson, *Half Humankind, Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England 1540 – 1640* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Both editions contain comprehensive introductions.

⁴⁴ McManus and Henderson set out a range of possible authors for these texts, from individual women to 'chivalrous gentlemen' who sought to defend the 'weaker sex'. See Henderson and McManus, *Half Humankind*, Introduction: 'The Debate about Women', pp. 3 – 46.

⁴⁵ Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, p. 151. All subsequent quotations from this work will appear in parenthesis as *Breitenberg* in my main text.

⁴⁶ William Gamage, *On the Feminine Supremacy*. Cited in Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womanhood 1540 - 1620* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984) p. 142.

⁴⁷ Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), p. 125

⁴⁸ Howard observes that [Marxist] social historians have found that the regulation of women was highest in the areas of England in which economic change was most rapid. Such historians argue that this is a result of traditional modes of ordering society along vertical lines of hierarchy, deference and paternalism were being disrupted and displaced by what we associate more with the horizontal alignment of people within classes and the rise of proto-capitalist economic practices. Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 102 – 3.

⁴⁹ Jardine, *Still Harping*, p. 162.

⁵⁰ Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. A3^r.

⁵¹ See Jean Howard, 'Sex and social Conflict: The Erotics of *The Roaring Girl*', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, edited by Susan Zimmermann (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁵² Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 98.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Valerie Traub, 'Gendering Mortality in Early Modern Anatomies', in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture*, edited by Valerie Traub, Lindsay M., Kaplan and Dymphna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 44.

In her article, Traub footnotes the ambiguous term 'science' as follows:

Science, of course, was neither a singular nor unified entity – in this period or in ours. Constructed out of various and often conflicting knowledges and practices, "science" in my usage exists as a shorthand for the early modern commitment to empirical modes of investigation and verification (*Gendering Mortality*, p. 86)

The other works to which I refer here are as follows: Cynthia Marshall, 'Wound Man, *Coriolanus*, Gender and the Theatrical Construction of Interiority', in Traub et. al., *Feminist Readings*; Howard Marchitello, 'Vesallus' *Fabrica* and Shakespeare's *Othello*: Anatomy, Gender and the Narrative Production of Meaning', *Criticism* 35. 4 (Fall, 1993); and Jonathan Sawday, 'The Fate of Marsyas: Dissecting the Renaissance Body', in *Renaissance Bodies*, edited by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion, 1990). All of these articles are much more fully discussed in Chapter V of this dissertation.

⁵⁵ Anon, *Haec Vir: or The Womanish Man* (London, John Trundle, 1620), sig. B2^v. The full argument between 'custome' and 'nature' is both articulate and sustained; it runs from B2^r – B3^r in the pamphlet.

⁵⁶ Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 103.

⁵⁷ Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 103. Howard is here drawing on the work of Joan Thirsk, and especially *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

⁵⁸ Thomas Adams, *Mystical Bedlam or the World of Mad-Men* (London, 1615), p. 51.

⁵⁹ Anon, *Muld Sacke: or the Apologie of Hic Mulier* (London, 1620), sig. Bi^r. My italics.

It is, of course, *precisely* these professions that would have allowed women a detailed knowledge of the body (together with access to the development of a two sex system of biological differentiation); because 'apothecary' was the name for a common physician in the period; 'surgeons' undertook much of the dissection in Renaissance London; and 'barbers' – as we will see in chapters five and six of this dissertation – were a profession that was not merely concerned with the cutting of hair but (as part of the Barber Surgeons' Guild) were a central to those who engaged in the investigative practices of early modern anatomy in England.

⁶⁰ George Gascoigne, *The Steele Glas* (London, 1576), sig. A1j^r.

⁶¹ Gascoigne, *Steele Glas*, sig. B1v^r.

⁶² Deliberate grammatical errors based upon confusions of gender were to become a prominent feature of the FTM cross-dressing debate. The 1621 *Hic Mulier* pamphlet, for example, begins:

"HIC MULIER; How now? Breake Priscians head at the first encounter? But two words, and they false Latine? Pardon mee good Signior *Constructioun*; for I will not answere thee as the Poet did, that I will do it in despite of the grammar: but I will maintaine, if it bee not the truest Latine in our kingdome, yet it is the commonest" (Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. A3^r).

As a rhetorical device, this construction was first identified (by George Puttenham in *The Art of English Poetry*) as 'Enallage' or 'the Figure of Exchange'. Available almost exclusively to the users of Greek and Latin, the figure – according to Puttenham – depends on the complex grammar of those languages, their "Grammatical accidents, or verball affects [...] that is to say, their diuers cases, moodes, tenses, genders, with variable terminations."

By adapting an ending belonging to another form, the classical speaker could change a word's meaning but not its central identity. As Puttenham puts it, "they changed not the very word, but kept the word, and changed the shape of him onely." Puttenham points out that English speakers "having no such variety of accidents, have little or no use for this figure." In actual fact, however, Puttenham contradicts himself and does include an example of the figure in his chapter on "Vices and Defomaties in speech and writing" in which he observes "solecismus or incongruitie [is] when we speake false English [...] by misusing the Grammatical rules to be obserued in cases, genders, tenses and such like, [...] Every poor scholler knowes the fault and calls it the *breaking of Priscians head*. For he was amongst the Latines a principal Grammarian." (My Italics).

This concept of: 'keep[ing] the word [i.e. body], and chang[ing] the shape [i.e. clothing] of him onely' has, of course, obvious resonances for the central argument of my current chapter.

⁶³ Gascoigne, *Steele Glas*, sig. D1j^r.

⁶⁴ Gascoigne, *Steele Glas*, Sig. I1^r/I1^v.

⁶⁵ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (London: Methuen, 1984), Act I Scene iii. L 45 – 6. My Italics.

⁶⁶ Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (London, 1583), p. 37.

⁶⁷ Stubbes (as quoted in Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, p. 152 (although the italicisation is my own). Breitenberg gets his reference to Stubbes from Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth Century Drama* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981), p. 67. Shepherd is himself working from an 1877 reprint of Stubbes' text, but there is still no excuse for Breitenberg's misquotation, since both Shepherd (and his 19th century source) reproduce the 1583 text faithfully.

⁶⁸ Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 98.

⁶⁹ William Harrison, *Harrison's Description of England*, edited by F.J. Furnivall, New Shakespeare Society, 6th Series, no. 1 (London, 1988), p. 73.

⁷⁰ See Greene, *A Notable Discovery of Cosenage* (London, 1592): 'These common truls [...] walke abroad [...] as stales to draw a man into hell'; and Chapman and Shirley, *The Ball* (London, 1632) Act II. Scene I. 'Have you much left as will / Keep you this old troul a fortnight longer?' The significance of the word 'trulle' (in relation to prostitution) is picked up on by Jean Howard (*The Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 95), but not by Breitenberg, who even miss-spells it and produces 'tulles' (Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, p. 152).

⁷¹ See, for example, Susan Foister "Sixteenth Century English Portraiture and the Idea of the Classical", in *Albion's Classicism: The Visual Arts in Britain, 1550 – 1660*, edited by Lucy Gent (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

⁷² Bianca F. Calabresi, *Alphabetical Positions: Engendering Letters in Early Modern England* (Un-published MS. A paper given to the American Comparative Literature Association, Montreal, April 1998), p. 2.

⁷³ Calabresi, *Alphabetical Positions*, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Calabresi, *Alphabetical Positions*, pp. 1 – 2.

⁷⁵ The opening passage of *Hic Mulier* contains an ornate drop capital and reads:

HIC MULIER.



HIC MULIER; How now? Breake
Priscians head at the first encoun-
ter? but two words, and they false
Latine? Pardon mee good Sig-
nior *Construction*; for I will not an-
swere thee as the Pope did, that I
will doe it in despite of the Grammar: but I will
maintaine, if it bee not the truest Latine in our King-

The use of majuscules is clearly prominent in this text: HIC MULIER appears twice in capitals (and therefore makes further use of them than any other figure in the passage, including Priscian, Construction, Grammar, the Pope and the Kingdom itself). As the passage continues, the first letters of God and Masculinity are repeatedly capitalised but, significantly, woman is not.

As may also be seen from the title page to *The Maid's Tragedy* (reproduced on page 140 of this dissertation) ASPATIA also appropriates capitals in her assertion of masculine authority (as well as locating herself to the left of the image, the side of a representation that is traditionally read and interpreted first in most western cultures).

In a mid sixteenth century miniature portrait of Sophonisba Anguissola (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) the Latin inscription encircling the painter's image has a text which reads *SOPHONISBA ANGUISSOLA, VIR[...], IPSUS MANU, EX SPECULO DEPICTA, CREMONAE*. The picture involves a subtle masking of part of the text (the word *VIR[...]*) so that the reader is unsure as to whether one word reads *vir* or *virgo* (and thus as to whether one should translate the text as 'Sophonisba Anguissola, Maiden, by her own hand, depicted this from a mirror' or 'Sophonisba Anguissola, Man, by hand, depicted this from a mirror' – since the Latin rules for the agreement of reflexive pronouns conveniently avoid the need to gender *ipsus manu* as either 'his' or 'her' hand). Calabresi observes of this portrait that

by calling attention overtly both to her hand and to the Renaissance convention of making such a self portrait while looking in a mirror, Anguissola informs the viewer that what looks like her left hand holding the disc and obscuring the last letters of *VIRGO* is a mirror image. It is really her right hand – her painting and writing hand – which transforms the letters, and hence which has the ability to transform her from *Virgo* to *Vir*.



Figure 9

Miniature Portrait of Sophonisba Anguissola
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Calabresi, *Alphabetical Positions*, p. 5

⁷⁶ William Avarell, *A Mervailous Combat of Contrarieties* (London, 1588), Sig. BI^v.

⁷⁷ Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 101

⁷⁸ Peter Stallybrass, 'Transvestism and the Body Beneath: Speculating on the Boy Actor', in Zimmerman, *Erotic Politics*, p. 64.

⁷⁹ Henry Parrot, *The Movs Trap* (London, 1606), Epigram 24, sig. Ci^r.

⁸⁰ Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. A3^v.

⁸¹ Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. A4^r.

⁸² Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. BI^v.

⁸³ Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. B3^v.

⁸⁴ Richard Niccols, *The Cuckow* (London, 1607), p. 14.

⁸⁵ Niccols, *Cuckow*, p. 14.

⁸⁶ *The Cuckow* predates *The Masque of Queenes* by three years; the costumes used in that performance were, however, largely developments of models already employed in *The Masque of Blackness* and

Hymenael. As Orgel and Strong observe, they are also derived from models depicted in Bolssard's *Mascarades* (1597). See Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1973), p. 139.

⁸⁷ A letter from Dudley Carlton to John Chamberlain, January 7th, 1605. *C.S.P.* 14. xli Number 6. (Quoted in Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, p. 89. For full illustrations of the costumes to both of these masques, see pp. 88 – 104 (*Blackness*) and 130 – 153 (*Queens*).

⁸⁸ Niccols, *Cuckow*, p. 16.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Morose's exclamation of horror when Mistress Epicoene (the supposedly 'silent woman' that he has married) transforms before him *post nuptias* into a dominant, controlling Amazon: 'She is my regent already! I have married a Penthesilea, a Semiramis, sold my liberty to a distaff!' Ben Jonson, *Epicoene*, Act III. scene v. 51 – 2.

⁹⁰ Niccols, *Cuckow*, p. 16.

⁹¹ Clare McManus, 'Answer me not but with your leg': female masquers and boy players in Jonson's *The Masque of Queens* and *Epicoene*' (unpublished MS. A paper given at the conference: *Kissing Spiders: representations of the female body on and off the early modern English Stage*, University of Warwick, April 29 – 30, 2000), p. 1.

⁹² McManus, *Answer me not*, p. 4.

⁹³ McManus, *Answer me not*, p. 5.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth Schaffer, 'Daughters of Ben' in *Ben Jonson and Theatre: Performance, Practice, Theory*, edited by Richard Cave, Elizabeth Schaffer and Brian Woolland (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 178 (note 23).

⁹⁵ The Dutch engraving (c. 1598 – showing Elizabeth as an Amazon with a sword raised to defend Protestant Europe) maps the Queen's body onto a plan of the continent and reveals, just above Germany, a single breast (the other breast being entirely absent). The Armada portrait of 1588, likewise, completely flattens and covers both of Elizabeth's breasts.

For an excellent discussion of Amazonian iconography surrounding Elizabeth (including reproductions of this Dutch Amazon engraving – that is held in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford – and the Armada portrait) see Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare*, pp. 61 – 66.

⁹⁶ John Williams, *A Sermon of Apparel* (London, 1620), p. 7.

⁹⁷ Williams, *Sermon*, p. 20.

⁹⁸ Williams, *Sermon*, p. 21 – 22.

⁹⁹ Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁰ Anon, *Hic Mulier*, sig. A3^r.

Chapter IV:

The Roaring Girl and The Maid's Tragedy: Strategies of Dramatic Recuperation

I

The survey of non-dramatic evidence that I hope to have provided in the previous chapter leads me to conclude that there were in fact two groups of FTM cross-dressers in early modern London: the first, a range of proto-feminist Viragos whose self-fashioning and assertive cultural agency was undertaken both as an attempt to liberate themselves from the mechanics of patriarchal subordination and as an effort to critique the cultural dominance of social hierarchies that were based solely on distinctions of gender. These women certainly made use of the freedoms that were afforded by their appropriation of male attire, but (rather than buying into the dominant taxonomies of gender that had created such unequal distributions of liberty) sought to exploit their transvestism in order to reveal the injustices and inequalities of a patriarchal social order. The other group of cross-dressers were, of course, the same women; but in their misconstrued or – as I will argue in this chapter – deliberately *reconstructed* incarnations as fictitious phantasms, fashioned both by and for the pleasure of men. These latter *hic muliers* were the women whom I have shown in chapter three to have been conceived of as erotically charged androgen playmates, women who lacked a subjectivity of their own and rather existed as the projected objects of (both homo- and hetero-erotic) male fantasy. It was these imaginary *hic muliers* who were the sexually incontinent whores of polemical literature and who were alleged to have maximised the possibilities that masculine apparel afforded for illicit sexual liaisons.

Whilst it is certainly true to say that the majority of representations of FTM transvestism that are to be found in sermons, in poetic and in pamphlet literature tend towards this second genus of *hic mulier*, the treatment of FTM cross-dressers in early modern drama has recently been argued to have constituted a much more subtly nuanced and – possibly even – fair-minded affair. It is consequently to dramatic representations of the early-seventeenth-century FTM transvestite that I now wish to turn my attention.

In a recent analysis of transvestism in Shakespearean comedy, Catherine Belsey has made use of post-structuralist and post-structuralist-feminist theory (and in particular the work of Saussure, Derrida and Kristeva) to draw attention to the ways in which, in general:

[the festive role-play of] Shakespearean comedy can be read as disrupting sexual difference, calling in[to] question that set of relations between terms which proposes as inevitable an antithesis between masculine and feminine, men and women.¹

In an informative and well argued essay, Belsey has attempted to outline the ideological strategies through which cross-dressed heroines such as Rosalind, Julia and Viola “generate a [...] radical challenge to patriarchal values by disrupting sexual difference” and has argued that the world(s) of licence and comic role-play that are permitted within Shakespeare’s ‘rustication and return’ sub-plots set up a *topos* of ambivalence and uncertainty within which audiences are never quite sure as to ‘who is speaking’ as a cross-dressed heroine utters ‘her’ lines (whether it is the female character, the male persona that ‘she’ has transiently adopted, the boy actor beneath the costume, the playwright, and so on).² As a result of such indistinctions (and drawing heavily on reception theory) Belsey has argued that the attendant pluralities of meaning that are inevitably manufactured by audiences allow for a deconstruction of *absolute knowledge* concerning sexual difference. Focussing her emphasis on uncovering the multiplicity of meanings and subjectivities that she considers to be energetically encouraged during the middle acts of these comedies, she has asserted that – despite repetitively recuperative narrative closures – “the[se] plays are more than their endings, and the heroines become wives only after they have been shown to be something altogether more singular – because more plural.”³ Her global assertion is that

conservative criticism reads in quest of familiar, obvious, common-sense meanings, and thus reaffirms what we already know [whereas] radical criticism [...] is concerned to produce readings which challenge that knowledge by revealing alternative meanings, disrupting the system of differences which legitimates the perpetuation of things as they are.⁴

Whilst this is doubtless true of philology, I would like to argue that literary criticism is – perhaps, yet unfortunately – only as far as Belsey’s construction of radical potentiality can pragmatically go; because, to me at least, radical *readings* of ‘holiday humour’ sub-plots are, inevitably, just that: *readings* – and they consequently only seem able to foreground the possibility of highlighting the political concerns and ideological agendas of late-twentieth-century *critics* (and then only at certain *moments* in plays) rather than the material concerns of sixteenth and seventeenth century *women* (or even the overall role of early modern theatre in the production, maintenance and policing of dominant ideological structures). Regardless of the danger of falling into the (somewhat circular) arguments that have recently arisen between generations of positivists, formalists, structuralists, post-structuralists, new historicists, cultural materialists, feminists and queer theorists [...] regarding the differing degrees of emphasis that should be placed on the emergence, recuperation and repression of radical ideas in early modern drama, I cannot help but consistently return to the fact that the narrative closures of these plays (which seem to stress normative heterosexual marriage as *the* inevitable *telos* of life – and concomitantly shore up the period’s received gender systems) are profoundly *recuperative* of the multi-valent erotic and egalitarian possibilities that have preceded them. Moreover, to me, early

modern drama itself repeatedly seems to emulate the somewhat closed (and I would assert essentially masculine) forms of Renaissance *rhetoric* (with its closed, declamatory teleology of thesis, antithesis and synthesis – a structure in which any radical idea that *seems* to arise in the middle of an argument is not so much evidence of possible shapings and modifications of that argument's eventual outcome, but, rather, a means of bolstering a series of *inevitable* and clearly *preordained* conclusions). Regrettably, then, I see the closed and linear structures of Renaissance rhetoric as much more central to the ideological project of most early modern drama than Belsey would care to admit.

The fact that narrative closure does not (indeed *cannot*) come in the middle of a Renaissance play does not, for me, negate the compelling evidence that fictional endings – and the recuperative shutting down of all options for women that they contain (other than subordinancy within heterosexual marriage) – appear to be the primary goal of virtually all early modern English theatre (and *especially* of comedy). Moreover, there is considerable historical evidence to support the notion that, precisely at moments in which early modern masculine authority perceived itself to be under threat, the theatre was one of the many avenues through which it pursued an array of damage limitation strategies. As John Chamberlain observed at the height of the *hic mulier* controversy: "our pulpits ring continually of the insolence and impudence of women: and to *helpe the matter forward the players have likewise taken them to taske.*"⁵

At the close of what is a well-structured and persuasive essay, Belsey herself even admits that her purpose "has been with meanings and glimpses of possible meanings" rather than an analysis of what constitutes the central ideological thrust of early modern comedy.⁶ Her work comes, after all, in a book whose central premise has been the construction of *Alternative Shakespeares*; nevertheless, as Linda Bamber has pointed out, despite the fact that post-structuralism offers tempting opportunities to revel in Renaissance texts as if they were written precisely in order to support the liberal intellectual projects of modern gender-politics, it is important to remember that philologists who work in terms of what Belsey has described as the "[limiting material certainties of] the history of Ideas or Marxist economism" perhaps do greater *overall* justice to what are often profoundly disturbing texts.⁷ As Kathleen McLuskie has also observed:

Shakespeare's plays are not primary explorations of 'the real nature of women' or even 'the hidden feelings in the human heart'. They were the products of an entertainment industry which, as far as we know, had no women shareholders, actors, writers or stagehands. His women characters were played by boys [or men] and, far from his plays being an expression of his idiosyncratic views, they all built on and adapted earlier stories.⁸

The school of thought that I therefore want to tap into in this chapter is one that acknowledges that a significant (if not preponderant) amount of the energy and assertiveness that cross-dressed female characters appear to exhibit in early modern literature is unfortunately only undertaken as a festive *aberration*; that it takes place in a well defined (and knowingly *transient*)

world of comic inversion; that, when the ideological chips are down, the play-world of any Renaissance play's world will return to the normative (and conservative) social reality of heterosexuality, and dynastic marriage for its women. Before I progress to an analysis of drama, I therefore want, briefly, to draw attention to what I consider to be a good example of the mechanics of this rhetorical formula as it may be seen in the pamphlet *Haec Vir or the Womanish Man* – a polemic that sets itself up, in many ways, as a theatrical performance of 'holiday humour'.

Haec Vir's title page claims that it is "an Answer to a late Booke intituled *Hic Mulier*. **Expressed in a Brief Dialogue** betweene *Haec Vir the Womanish Man*, and *Hic Mulier the Man-Woman*." The first page of the text proper, likewise, resembles the title-page of a play and even has its own kind of *dramatis personae* that introduces:

The Speakers.

Hæc-Vir ; The Womanish-Man.

Hic-Mulier ; The Man-Woman.

This twenty-two-page pamphlet purports to support female cross-dressing and was the supposed follow-up to the vehement misogynist anti-cross-dressing invective *Hic Mulier or the Man-Woman* that I analysed in chapter three. Since this second pamphlet followed so hot on the heels of the first, however (it was licensed to John Trundle on February sixteenth, only a week after the same bookseller had published *Hic Mulier*), it seems highly probable that some element of planning was undertaken in the release of both works, especially since, taken together, they appear to form a decidedly co-ordinated attack on both male and female transgressors of conventional, gender-based sumptuary regulations. In all probability, then, the same anonymous author penned the pair of pamphlets.

Significantly to my analysis of the dramatic representation of female agency, the writer of *Hæc Vir* conducts what is only ever a quasi-defence of *hic mulier* in the form of a fictional *dialogue* between the now well-established Virago (and her newly instituted male counterpart) that is rhetorical and yet decidedly *theatrical*. Their interview indicates the degree to which gender boundaries were perceived as being obfuscated by cross-dressing and – in the same formulation that Catherine Belsey has articulated in relation to Shakespearean comedy – neither of the characters on the *Haec Vir* 'stage' appear to know 'who is speaking'. The humorous exchange with which the pamphlet starts thus certainly seems to play upon a lack of gender recognition – and it therefore reproduces the sort of theatrical asides that are typical of Shakespearean comedy. I quote its opening in its entirety:

Hæc Vir. Most redoubted and worthy sir (for less than a knight I cannot take you) you are most happily given unto mine embrace.

Hic Mulier. Is she mad? Or doth she mock mee? Most rare and excellent lady, I am the servant of your vertues, and desire to be employed in your service.

Hæc Vir. Pitie of patience, what doth he behold in me, to take me for a woman? Valient and magnanimous sir, I shal desire to build the tower of my fortune upon no stronger foundation then the benefit of your grace and favour.

Hic Mulier. O! Proud ever to be your servant.

Hæc Vir. No, the servant of your servant.

Hic Mulier. The tythe of your friendship (good lady) is above my merit.

Hæc Vir. You make me rich beyond expression, but faire knight, the truth is I am a man, and desire but the obligation of your friendship.

Hic Mulier. It is ready to be to be sealed and delivered to your use. Yet I would have you understand I am a woman.

Hæc Vir. Are you a woman?

Hic Mulier. Are you a man? O Juno Lucina help me.

Hæc Vir. Yes I am [...] ⁹

In the rest of the pamphlet, *hic mulier* goes on to articulate various defences for herself (and even seems to voice a strong proto-feminist defence, demanding “How do I forsake my creation, that doe all the rights and offices due to my Creation? I was created free, born free, and liue free: what lets me then so to spinne out my time, that I may dye free?” [B1^v - B2^r]). She also claims of women that “we are as free-borne as Men, haue as free election, and as free spirits, we are compounded of like parts, and may with like liberty make benefit of our Creations” [B3^r]). Whatever *hic mulier* might *claim* in the course of this pamphlet, however, the final upshot of the polemic is as conservative as it is recuperative – because, in its final analysis, cross-dressing is decried as ridiculous and foolish and the *Haec Vir* author ends this ‘performance’ with a declaration (from the womanish-man) that appears to be a manifest effort to encourage the wider social emulation of the pamphlet’s normative narrative closure. As *haec vir* calls for a reinstatement of conventional hierarchies of gender, the effeminate fop resolves:

Inough [...] I will no more be *Hæc Vir*, but *Hic Vir*, nor you *Hic Mulier* but *Hæc Mulier*. from henceforth deformitie shall packe to Hell; and if at any time hee hide himselfe upon the earth, yet it shall bee with contempt and disgrace [...] Henceforth we will live nobly like ourselves, ever sober, ever discreet, ever worthy; true men and true women. We will bee henceforth like well-coupled Doues, full of industry, full of loue: I meane, not of sensuall and carnall loue, but heauenly and diuine loue which proceedes from God [...] ¹⁰

Haec Vir’s epiphany at the close of his declamatory performance revolves around a divinely sanctioned notion of heterosexual companionship – accompanied by a healthy dose of Puritan ‘industry’. The ‘sober’ ‘discreet’ and ‘worthy’ behaviour of ‘true men’ and ‘true women’ is thus invoked as a ‘cure’ for the sort of theatrical playing-around with gender that the pamphlets’ characters have previously articulated. I would accordingly assert that *Haec Vir* is remarkably similar to the thought processes (and rhetorical projects) of much Renaissance comedy.

II

Jean Howard has recently observed that although the thrust of early modern drama is, in the main, towards containing threats to the traditional patriarchal gender system, this is not uniformly the case. As she puts it: "as sites of social struggle conducted through discourse, these plays vary markedly in their ideological implications."¹¹ Howard has drawn attention to the wide spectrum of attitudes that are evident in comic plays, and has claimed that they vary from downright misogyny (in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene* – a play that she sees as "saturated with the fear of women who have moved or might move from their proper place of subordination")¹² through varying sympathetic treatments of the social concerns behind cross-dressing (as they are articulated in Shakespearean comedy – and in which she sets up a league-table of misogynist recuperation that is topped by *Twelfth Night* and gets progressively less significant in *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*), to Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl*, in which she claims that "we encounter a cross-dressed woman who embodies a more radical assault than do Shakespeare's heroines on the hierarchical gender system and the material injustices which, in conjunction with other social practices, it spawned."¹³ Howard sees the figure of Mary Frith (or Moll Cutpurse) as a complex articulation of female subjectivity and claims that "[*The Roaring Girl*] is more forthright than most [plays] in exploring the links between women's political subordination and the channelling of her erotic desire into heterosexual marriage." It is therefore to this utopian vision of a proto-feminist *Roaring Girl*, Middleton and Dekker's Moll Cutpurse, that I will first turn in my analysis of early modern theatrical recuperations of female agency.

The strongest documentary proof of an actual *hic mulier* on the streets of London (and not the projected fantasy of misogynist pamphlet fiction that I have demonstrated in chapter three) is to be found in the court records and various genres of popular literature that purport to document the real-life character Mary Frith (who, to save confusion, will here be variously known as Mad Moll, Long Meg of Westminster and Moll Cutpurse). Evidence for this shadowy figure may be drawn from three discrete quarters: (i) her appearance in the *Consistory of London Correction Book* (folios 19 – 20, 1612); (ii) the two anonymous published accounts of her life (*The Life and Pranks of Long Meg of Westminster* (1650) and *The Life and Death of Miss Mary Frith, alias Moll Cutpurse* (1662)) and (iii) her appearance in Dekker and Middleton's romantic comedy *The Roaring Girl* (1611).¹⁴

On the whole, the evidence about Moll paints a picture of a strong and independent woman who decided to break from the constraints that patriarchal society had placed upon her own idiosyncratic definition of femininity in order to re-fashion (and re-gender) herself entirely. The opening section of what purports to be her autobiography (*The Life*) therefore tells its readers of the degree of distinctiveness that Moll saw in herself from the age of twenty, at which point she apparently confessed:

viewing the manners & customs of the age, I see myself so distempered & estranged from them as if I had been born and bred in the Antipodes.¹⁵

According to *The Life*, Moll originally hailed from Lancashire – but was quickly drawn to London where, largely as a result of the paucity of stimulating employment that was available to women, she undertook a brief stint as a tavern server before proceeding to set herself up in the underworld as a fence operating around Fleet Street. Despite its emphatic insistence that Moll was never a prostitute, *The Life* does assert that, as a result of her rather liminal employment, she was soon placed in the city prison for:

unreasonable and suspicious walking [at 1.00 am] in doublet and petticoat.¹⁶

The Life is a rollicking fiction (much in the style of the 'autobiography' of Catalina de Erauso to which I briefly alluded in chapter three) and the existence that it tantalisingly delineates for Moll (in a low-life canter's paradise of thieves and pickpockets) is one that permits her to consort with an assortment of rogues and rascals.¹⁷ Moll has numerous (and inevitable) skirmishes with the law (from which she almost ubiquitously emerges as the victor) and there are several instances in which she is described as wearing items of masculine apparel. On one occasion it is even claimed that she:

rode from Charing Cross to Shoreditch astraddle on horseback in breeches and doublet, boots and spurs, all like a man *cap a pe*.¹⁸

The several accounts of Moll's life all agree on one thing; in 1612 she was sentenced to do penance (as a result of her cross-dressing) and was wrapped in a white sheet at Paul's Cross during Sunday morning sermon – although her tears of guilt and shame on this occasion are argued by John Chamberlain to have been more to do with the fact that she was 'maudlin drunk' on the several cups of sack that she had consumed before arriving to make reparation, than as a result of any actual remorse. Despite her idiosyncratic use of cross-gendered apparel, however, in none of the evidence presented by *any* of the four major sources about her life is Moll's appropriation of masculine attire explained as arising from incontinent sexual desire or moral perversion. In fact, as Stephen Orgel has recently pointed out, the evidence from her trial (as it was recorded in the *Consistory of London Correction Book* in 1612) reveals that:

she being pressed to declare whether she had not byn dishonest of hr body & hath not also drawne other women to lewdes by her perswasions & by carrying herselfe lyke a bawde, she absolutely denied *that* she was chargeable with eyther of these imputacions.¹⁹

Unlike Marie le Marcis, however, the notion of lesbianism as a possible motivation for Moll Cutpurse's cross-dressing would seem to be precluded by a passage in *The Life* in which, speaking of the 'shameless slut' Abigail (who had once kissed her) Moll asserts that for her pains:

I got hold of her and being near at home, dragged her to the conduit, where I washed her polluted lips for her, and wrenched her lewd petticoats to some purpose, tumbling her under a cock and letting the water run til she had not a dry thread about her, and had her soundly kicked to boot.²⁰

Moll's disdainful attitude towards hermaphrodites is made equally clear in a passage in which she not only denounces the well-known London androgen, Aniseed-Water Robin, but also reveals how she orchestrated a campaign of persecution to make his life a misery in an attempt to drive him from her part of town:

there was also a fellow, a contemporary of mine as remarkable as myself, called Aniseed-water Robin, who was clothed very near my antic mode, being an hermaphrodite, a person of both sexes, being the very derision of nature's impotency, whose redundancy in making him man and woman had in effect made him neither, having not the strength nor reason of the male, nor the finesse nor subtlety of the female [...] I begot in me a naturall abhorrence of him that what by threats and my private instigating of boys to fall upon throw dirt at him, I made him quit my walk and habitation that I might have no further scandall among my neighbors, who used to say: "Here comes Moll's husband."²¹

Given the good-natured and celebrated nature of these literary and folkloric incarnations, then, it is hardly surprising that the eponymous heroine of Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* appears to be presented as an honest (and conspicuously celibate, if not actually asexual) figure – a woman who performs the selfless role of honest marriage-broker to the young love-struck protagonists of the play whilst simultaneously (yet somehow un-problematically) articulating a critique of the *institution* of marriage itself (together with a re-evaluation of the patriarchal social structures that it upheld – and particularly the unjust degree of power that it assigned to men over women). In much current criticism, Moll Cutpurse has therefore been widely read as the most complex, honest and intelligent of *The Roaring Girl's* dramatic characters (perhaps even of all early-modern cross-dressed theatrical heroines). She is a figure whose subjectivity and control over her own sexuality are persistently argued to be paramount, whose articulations regarding the economic factors leading to prostitution are refreshingly perceptive and who not only fights men (on both literal and metaphorical levels) but repeatedly wins.

That such a critical consensus prevails for Middleton and Dekker's 'Mad Moll' should not really surprise the reader of contemporary philology all that much (nor, perhaps, the notion that she is perhaps the *only* entirely sympathetic interpretation of *hic mulier* that is to be found in early modern dramatic literature). Her principal creator, Thomas Dekker, has been portrayed by a whole generation of literary critics as a playwright more concerned with satirising true folly, condemning spite (and hypocrisy) and in championing the rights of oppressed groups within his contemporaneous London society than with fighting a rearguard action to support the stance of a dominant (patriarchal) oligarchy.²² What is generally accepted to be Dekker's most significant input into the collaborative tragi-comedy *The Witch of Edmonton*, for example, therefore presents many critics with a sympathetic, humanitarian, portrait of Mother Sawyer as a woman who has been unfairly accused of witchcraft (and is the clear scapegoat of her ill-educated, misogynist and class-prejudiced rural Hertfordshire community). Simon Eyre in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* has, likewise, been seen as an uncomplicated representation of the archetypal self-made man, a character who does not forget his 'working-class' roots but retains his commitment to festive bounty through the selfless sating of his numerous apprentices' desires.²³

That Dekker was apparently reluctant to censure *hic mulier* also appears to be evident from her absence (at the height of the controversy) in his 1620 poem *Dekker his Dream: In which beeing rapt with a poeticall enthusiasme, the great Volume of Heaven and Hell to him were opened, in which he read many Wonderful Things*.²⁴ The *Dream* is an unambiguously zealous work; in it Dekker frequently quotes biblical authority and periodically even assumes a quasi-apocalyptic tone. The poem (apparently the product "of a long sleepe, which for almost seven yeares together, seized al my sences, drowning them in a deep lethe of forgetfulnesse, and burying me to the World, in the lowest grave of Oblivion") even concludes with an apocalyptic vision of the last judgement (and the torments of brimstone and sulpher that await the proud and foolhardy).²⁵ Before its castigatory closure, however, Dekker undertakes a detailed tour of hell, the place to which he claims women who were excessive in their apparel will be amongst the first to be consigned and in which he reports of:

Gay gawdy women, who spent yeares of *Noones*
In tricking up their *Fronts* with *Chaperoones*,
And powdred *Haire*: whose *Taylors* sheares did quarrell
With *Pride*, how to cut onely their apparrell
Whose *Backs* wore out more *Fashions* then their wit
Phantasticknesse being short to alter it
Into so many shapes, as they did vary
The *loades*, being more then those when fed mules carry
(*In Sumpters*) *Great Lords* things: whose heads were rear'd
I th'Aire as a *Stags*, 'bove all the Heard;
And when they rode (their *foote-men* running by)
They seem'd prow'd *Ships* in all their *Gallantry*,
Newly-arriv'd, fully freighted, under sayle,
Slight empty *Cock-boates* dauncing at their Tayle;
These *Dames*, who each day in French *Chariots* sat
Glistring like *Angels*, a prow'd-bounding trot
From foure faire *Steedes* drawing all on them to wonder
That the clowdes eccho'd, and the *Earth* shooke under: [...]
O horrid sight! These (onse so much *Ador'd*)
In hell were drudges, spurned at, and abhor'd;
Their *Painted cheekes*, turn'd into *Witches* looks,
Bright *Haire* to snakes, long *Fingers* into hooks,
Pearle-chaines to roapes, their gawdy *Robes* to *Ragges*
And delicate bodies, uglier farre then *Hagges*.²⁶

Despite the venom (and blatant misogyny) of this attack, however, there is in no part of this 1620 poem a condemnation of the cross-dressed *hic mulier* – a phenomenon that Dekker really would have had to have slept through the last seven years in order to have avoided noticing on the streets of London.

So, is the total absence of any form of censure in Dekker's poem characteristic of the author's overall reaction to FTM cross-dressing? Well, in *The Roaring Girl*, Mary Frith (who is also referred to as Mad Moll, Moll Cutpurse and Long Meg in the play) certainly appears on the surface to be treated quite even-handedly; she is ostensibly a character who emerges, in spite of everything, at the end of her narrative as a steadfastly strong and independent woman. Her sexual propriety seems to be undermined in no part of this text and she displays none of the

libidinous excesses that may be evidenced in many other works outlining FTM transvestites. In Dekker and Middleton's fictional London world, Moll seems to function as the true friend and honest confidante of a love-struck heterosexual couple – Sebastian Wengrave and Mary Fitzallard – the pair whose guileless devotion effectively drives the plot; yet (and despite Moll's obvious commitment to heterosexual coupling for others) she never hesitates to put down any amorous advance that might come her way from the more obtuse and lecherous of her male collocutors, and in such cases it always manifestly clear that it is the *men* rather than *Moll* that audiences are supposed to pity and despise. As Mary Beth Rose has figured it, in *The Roaring Girl*, Moll is a kind of 'touchstone' against whom any given character's worth or dramatic appeal can quickly be established in direct relation to how they react against her.²⁷

Dekker and Middleton seem at pains to demonstrate that the supposed connections between cross-dressing and sexual impropriety are erroneous; in doing so they create a character who ostensibly remains chaste (who is, perhaps, even a virgin). Their FTM cross-dresser is therefore a woman who uses male attire in order to challenge masculine *social* supremacy and who fights men on her own terms, rather than luring men into any *sexual* venery. Moll is hardly the enticing object of the sort of erotic poetry and misogynist pamphlet fiction that I have examined in chapter three. In reply to Sebastian's mock [?] offer of marriage Moll humorously unpacks the patriarchal institution before her audience in order to reveal its central role in the subordination of women. In a speech during which she asserts her social independence (and in which her bawdy wordplay appears to culminate in the suggestion that she rejects penetrative heterosexual sex altogether because she values an in-tact hymen above the presence of a male glans) she observes:

[...] I have no humour to marry. I love
To lie o' both sides o' th' bed myself; and again, o'th' other
side, a wife, you know, ought to be obedient, but I fear me
I am too headstrong to obey, therefore I'll ne'er go about
it. I love you so well, sir, for your good will, I'd be loath
you should repent your bargain after, and therefore we'll
ne'er come together at first. I have the head now of myself,
and am man enough for a woman; marriage is but a chopping
and changing, where a maiden loses one head, and
has a worse I' th' place.

(II.ii. 36 – 45) ²⁸

Moll's rather one-sided exchange with the lascivious Laxton (who 'would give but too much money to be nibbling with [her]' (II.i. 187) and who wishes to consume Moll like "marrowbone" in Gray's Inn Fields (II.i. 193)) is equally typical of her apparent characterisation as the play's voice of 'proto-feminist' reason. Asserting the general chastity of the female sex (and thereby implying that bad reputations are most often caused by the false braggings of men) she enquires of Laxton:

How many of our sex by such as thou
Have their good thoughts paid with a blasted name
That never deserved loosely or did trip

In path of whoredom beyond cup and lip?

(III.i. 81 - 4)

As if undertaking a direct criticism of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet, Moll subsequently proceeds to inquire as to whether there is any tangible *proof* of her unchaste behaviour. A question to which (according to the evidence with which the play has thus far provided her audience) there can be only one response: silence. In an outraged tone she therefore demands:

What durst move you, sir,
To think me whorish? - A name which I'd tear out
From the high German's throat if it lay ledger there
To dispatch privy slanders against me!
In thee I defy all men

(III.ii. 88 – 93)

Moll's condemnation of Laxton's sexual suppositions – and the concomitant slander that he is prepared to spread about her – is then followed up with a further rhetorical question (and one that again employs a metaphor that emphasises Moll's virginity and hints at the fact that she will never yield herself sexually to men):

[...] why, good fisherman,
Am I thought meat for you, that never yet
Had angling rod cast toward me?

(III.i. 101 – 3)

Her proto-feminist defence is finally summed up by the revelation that she will use Laxton's body as a message to the world: on one of the anatomical sites that delineates the clear biological differences between women and men, Moll will carve out (in scar-tissue) the fact that she is her *own* woman, a self-fashioning subject who has neither the desire (nor the need) to live her life for (or with) men. On Laxton's bare chest Moll will consequently declare herself to be both men's vanquisher and their superior:

[...] howe'er
Thou and the baser world censure my life,
I'll send 'em word by thee, and write so much
Upon thy Breast, 'cause thou shalt bear't in mind:
Tell them 'twere base to yield where I have conquered.
I scorn to prostitute myself to a man.,
I that can prostitute a man to me!

(III.i. 106 – 12)

Well, all this is certainly didactic stuff – and critics are therefore undoubtedly right to mark *The Roaring Girl* out as one of the most sympathetic plays to deal with an autonomous (and assertive) cross-dressed woman on the early modern English stage. I would therefore certainly like to make it *absolutely clear* at this point that I agree with Alison Findlay in her assertion that Moll's claim to "please myself, and care not else who loves me" (V.i. 349) is laudable, precisely because it is:

inimical to the model of feminine behaviour laid down in Renaissance conduct books, and at odds with the traditional roles allotted to women as nurturing figures who serve the interests of others in the household.²⁹

*But ... Looking at the representations of femininity that this play as a whole has to offer (and particularly Moll's position in relation to the few other women who appear in the text) I would now like to demonstrate that the apparent agency that is exhibited by Moll is not the whole story of *The Roaring Girl* – and that there is, I think, a significant gap between what Moll says and what she actually does in this fictional narrative; the result of which behaviour is that, as well as having a strong proto-feminist incarnation, Middleton and Dekker's 'Mad Moll' also fulfils at least four other (and much more conservative or recuperative) roles.*

In what follows, then, I aim to argue that Moll:

(i) Stands in as a potential mock-wife for Sebastian (and that her dubious anatomy and emancipatory articulations are therefore considered such a 'monstrous inversion' that Sir Alexander is forced to agree to a dynastic marriage that he had previously ruled out).³⁰

(ii) That she acts as a kind of 'panderess' who brings the play's two young lovers together so that they can enjoy each other's erotic embraces (and possibly that she also allows Laxton to prostitute Gallipot's own wife back to him)

(iii) That she articulates repeatedly misogynist views concerning the other women in the play

and

(iv) That far from rejecting heterosexual notions of eroticism, she articulates (and demonstrates) a consistently phallocentric vision of her own (hetero)sexuality.

As I move into the next section of my analysis, then, I would like to assert that – although Moll Cutpurse appears on the *surface* to articulate an alternative *telos* to that of companionate heterosexual marriage (and to reject the almost inevitable female subjugation that it entailed) – if one scratches away at the surface of Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl* just a little, one rapidly begins to see its 'proto-feminism' very quickly breaking down.

Little criticism of *The Roaring Girl* (other than Jean Howard's seminal 1992 essay) spends very much time at all looking at the three citizen's wives, Mistress Tiltyard, Mistress Gallipot and Mistress Openwork; yet, in a play in which the male characters outnumber the females by at least seven to one (and despite the apparent pre-eminence of Moll and her much touted autonomy or independence), these three wives are of obvious dramaturgical significance. Once the central narrative business of the main Sebastian Wengrave/Mary Fitzallard love plot (and the sub-plot of Sir Alexander's engagement of Trapdoor to spy on Moll) has been concluded, it is to the citizen's wives that Dekker and Middleton turn their attention at the start of their second act. In the longest stage direction of the play, a mercantile townscape of conspicuous consumption is tantalisingly laid out before the Fortune's audience and

[...] *three shops open in a rank: the first a pothecary's [sic] shop, the next a feather shop, the third a sempster's shop. MISTRESS GALLIPOT in the first, MISTRESS TILTYARD in the next, MASTER OPENWORK and his Wife in the third. To them enters LAXTON, GOSHAWK, and GREENWIT.*

The gallants flock to these shops – or rather to the merchant's wives who inhabit them – and the audience soon find out that it is not only the 'fine bands and ruffs', 'good smoke' and 'general feathers' that these city-women purvey in which the men are interested. Within fifteen lines of the play's first major staging of the female body it has therefore been understood that Mistress Gallipot (the [a]pothecary's wife) believes herself to be engaged in an adulterous (but as yet unconsummated) relationship with the gallant Laxton, and – as the scene proceeds – a distinctly misogynistic picture emerges of at least two of these citizen wives (Mistress Gallipot and Mistress Openwork). Moreover, a distinct tension is also swiftly set up between this pair of women and Moll.

Within a few lines of Moll's masculinised entrance (*"in a frieze jerkin and a black safeguard"*) Mistress Openwork is hen-pecking her husband and accusing him of venery with this cross-dresser (II.i. 225 ff) (she therefore plays directly on the sexualised understanding of FTM cross-dressers that is articulated in literature such as the *hic mulier* pamphlet). Mistress Gallipot, likewise, slanders Moll and calls her a hermaphrodite ("Some will not stick to say that she's a man, and some, both man and woman" (II.i. 210)). Goody Openwork's open dislike of Moll is so profound that she attempts to eject her from her establishment after Moll has uttered only seven words (Moll's "Let me see a good shag ruff" is roughly met with "Get you from my shop! [...] I'll sell you nothing; I warn ye my house and shop" (II.i. 223 and 233 – 35). Interestingly, however, it is the subsequent spat that ensues between Moll and Goody Openwork that raises Moll's bile to the degree in which she is prompted to vent her spleen on the 'fellow with a rapier' who inauspiciously happens to wander on stage at precisely that moment, rather than any overt desire in Moll to attack masculinity *per se*:

Moll. You, goody Openwork, you that prick out a poor living
 And sews many a bawdy skin-coat together,
 Thou private pandress between shirt and smock,
 I wish thee for a minute but a man:
 Thou shouldst never use more shapes; but as th'art'
 I pity my revenge. Now my spleen's up, I would not mock
 it willingly.

Enter a Fellow with a long rapier by his side

- Ha, be thankful,

Now I forgive thee.

Mistress Openwork. Marry, hang thee! I never asked forgiveness in my
 life.

Moll. You, goodman swine's face

Fellow. What, will you murder me [...]

(II.i. 236 – 46)

As Alison Findlay has noted, Moll therefore displays towards the citizen's wives "just the misogynist attitudes she later criticises in Laxton" – and it is not just in this scene that she does so.³¹

Moll certainly appears to have scant regard for the sexual fidelity of the citizen wives. She says to Mistress Tiltyard "I'll try one spear against your chastity, Mistress Tiltyard, though it prove too short by the burr" (II.i. 342 – 3); she even warns Master Openwork of his wife's sexual incontinence, urging him: "Prithee tend thy shop and prevent bastards" (II.i. 390). Such misogynist treatment of the citizen wives does not only come from Moll, however, and Middleton and Dekker trot out a whole gambit of prejudiced assumptions that centre on city women and come from a variety of mouths. What is more, for the most part, it is bigoted conjecture that goes entirely unchallenged. Mistress Openwork and Mistress Gallipot are both clearly set up as scolds; they dominate a pair of husbands who are, in turn, set up as effeminised as a result of the fact that they still dote on their wives regardless of such verbal cruelty (see II.i. and III.ii. respectively)). Gallipot even apparently accepts with resignation the inevitable fact that it's not uncommon for husbands to be cuckolded by their wives ("Hast thou on my bed / Thrust my soft pillow under another's head? / I'll wink at all faults, Prue; 'las, that's no more / Than what some neighbours near thee have done before." (III.ii. 114 – 16)); he also asserts that his spouse is capable of cuckolding him over the unifying symbol of middle-class companionate marriage, his own shop counter ("My bed? Ha, ha, like enough! – A shop-board will serve / To have a cuckold's coat cut out upon" (IV. ii. 297 – 98)). The same figure swerves not at attempting to put Laxton off his wife by slandering her – and is even prepared to claim that one of his servants has already slept with her ("I'll tell him thou'rt with child [...] Or give out / One of my men was ta'en abed with thee" (III.ii. 136 – 8)). At his wife's instigation, Gallipot unwittingly pays thirty pounds to Laxton so that the gallant can prostitute himself to Gallipot's wife (II.ii. 155) and thereby creates a situation in which Mistress Gallipot is constructed both as a whore herself *and* as her sexual partner's pander. Eventually, in an exchange between Gallipot and Laxton, Goody Gallipot is objectified to such a degree that – once her reproductive capabilities have been made use of – the rest of her anatomy is translated into an inanimate morsel of flesh:

I married her, have lien with her, and got
Two children on her body: think but on that.
Have you so beggarly an appetite,
When I upon a dainty dish have fed,
To dine upon my scraps, my leavings? Ha, sir?

(III.ii 243 – 47)

According to Laxton, *all* women are temptresses of biblical proportions and (just as is evident in misogynist projections of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet) women are rendered 'Eves' who exist merely as bait that will tempt men to hell:

That wile
By which the serpent did the first woman beguile
Did ever since all women's bosoms fill:
You're apple eaters all, deceivers still

(III.iii. 262 – 65)

As Jean Howard has pointed out, even the sexual pleasure that the citizen-wives talk of giving their husbands is mediated through sexual practices that are linked neither to their female agency nor even necessarily to their *biological* femininity because

when the gallants [...] importune with the merchant wives for favour, these wives then must 'ingle with our husbands abed [...] ' (4.2. 53) [...] It is worth pausing at the verb. Exactly what is it to 'ingle' with one's husband? The *OED* glosses this very passage as to 'fondle with' one's husband. But to me the verb also suggests to play the ingles, that is, the boy catamite, with one's husband, possibly meaning to engage in anal sex with him. While anal sex can certainly be part of the eroticism between men and women, it seems important that the wives, as they describe giving special sexual pleasure to their husbands in order to wheedle something from them, use a word bringing to mind the specific sexual act connected with the boy partner, the ingles or ganymede [...]³²

and as Howard has also pointed out, it is not respect and reconciliation between the citizens and their wives that is staged at the end of the play, but rather a strong homo-social bonding between the male characters. She observes:

The resolution of the citizen plot reveals the deep strand of misogyny running through the merchant plot. These clever, economically useful women who demand more sex, or different sex, than their husbands afford them, are shunted aside at the end of Act 4 so that an orgy of bonding can occur between the merchant husbands and the aristocratic gallants [...] no contest involving a woman can disrupt male friendship. Class aggression pales before gender solidarity.³³

The conclusion to the merchant plot of *The Roaring Girl* thus makes it abundantly clear that conventional women, the 'normal' wives who inhabit the streets and shops of early modern London, are (perhaps) to be tolerated as economic necessities (or even homoeroticised concubines) but that they will *never* be more than pawns in the complicated power games that are played out between men.

Thus in the 'storm' (IV.ii. 258) that takes place between Laxton and Gallipot, it is Mistress Gallipot who is tossed like a cork between the pair. Her attempts to control the situation and exploit her husband are revealed as useless and, in the end, both of her bucks bamboozle her. In Act IV Laxton underscores female objectivity and insignificance as he ironically uses his 'libel of precontract' (IV. ii 249) to attempt to prostitute Gallipot's own wife back to him for a hundred pounds. The commodification of Mistress Gallipot is absolute; she is once again an object to be devoured – this time at a price ("Tell you what: / Make up the money I had an hundred pound, / And take your bellyful of her" (IV. ii. 262 – 64)). When the play then attempts to skin and film the ulcerous place of the Laxton, Gallipot and Mistress Gallipot *ménage à trois* (by means of the gallant's final assertion that he has never slept – nor indeed ever had the intention of sleeping with Gallipot's wife) Laxton asserts that he has simply engaged in a complicated 'game' in order to 'revenge' his male phallic aggression against Mistress Gallipot's claims of chastity. Laxton thus argues that he has undertaken all that he has done in order to prove Mistress Gallipot wrong in her assertion:

That only such spots in city dames were stained
Justly, but by men's slanders; [and that] for her own part,
She vowed that you [Gallipot] had so much of her heart,

No man by all his wit, by any wile
 Never so fine spun, should yourself beguile
 Of what in her was yours [...]

(IV. ii. 308 – 13)

as Laxton sees it:

I scorned one woman thus, should brave all men,
 And – which more vexed me – a she-citizen;
 Therefore I laid siege to her
 [...] But sir, I swear
 By heaven and by those hopes men lay up there,
 I neither have nor had a base intent
 To wrong your bed. What's done is merriment;
 Your gold I pay back with this interest:
 When I had most power to do it, I wronged you least

(IV. ii. 316 – 335)

What is *crucial* about Laxton's lines here, of course, is that they prove Moll Cutpurse *wrong* in her defiant Lincoln's Inn Fields assertion that whoredom is more the result of male bragging than female imperfection. As he graciously gives Mistress Gallipot back to her husband, Laxton consequently emphasises the point about her undoubted whoredom and objectivity (even as he patronises the pair of citizens) by repaying the money that he has had from Gallipot "*with [capital] interest*" (IV.ii. 334). Significantly also, this 'interest' is very likely the money that Laxton has received *from Moll* in Lincoln's Inn's Fields (because audiences know that he is impoverished. He has had to wheedle money out of Mistress Gallipot in order to 'hire' Moll in the first place and they have certainly seen him make no other money in the course of the play, other than that which he was freely given by Moll). In the final insult to femininity that comes at the tail of this scene, when Mistress Gallipot attempts to speak in response to the humiliation that she has had to experience, she is roundly silenced (at the same time as being called a slut) by her husband, who commands her "Wife, brag no more / Of holding out: who most brags is most whore." (IV. ii. 342 – 43). The line is epigrammatic; and the weight of its supposed truth is reinforced by its masculine rhyme; yet, as any audience knows, it is not Mistress Gallipot, but *Moll Cutpurse* herself who has, of course, 'most brag[ged]' of 'holding out' in this play.

In terms of having 'voices' that may be raised against those of men, then, the city-women of *The Roaring Girl* would clearly seem to be denied; yet, on the literal level of performance, even the supposedly pro-active figure of Moll says not much more than the play's most significant representation of patriarchal authority: Sir Alexander Wengrave (and she certainly does not have more *stage time* than he does). Apart from Moll's two set-piece fights (one with the 'fellow with a rapier' and the other one with Laxton – both of which we may now see to be subtly undermined elsewhere in the text) and her famous 'canting' scene (V.i.), Moll in actual fact says remarkably *little* in this play. Whilst Sir Alexander Wengrave has approximately four-hundred-and-fifteen lines (and Moll therefore beats him by seventy-five since she has about five-hundred), more than *one-hundred-and-fifty* of her lines come in the canting scene in which she principally translates Trapdoor and Tearcat's 'gibberish' (V.i. 95) for the entertainment and titillation of an assortment of

nobles who surround her (Lord Nolan, Sir Thomas Long and Sir Beauteous Ganymede). Moreover, in the scenes in which Moll *does* articulate her own opinions, they are oftentimes profoundly disturbing defences of rather masculine figurations of phallic aggression. Moll not infrequently criticises men for not being 'man' *enough* and, as Jean Howard has observed:

We [...] find her attacking unmanly men and braggarts: men who lack the 'stones' appropriate to their sex. Watching Jack Dapper buy a feather, she is moved to remark that 'the gallants of these times are shallow lechers, they put not their courtship home enough to a wench, 'tis impossible to know what woman is thoroughly honest, because she's ne'er thoroughly tried (2.1. 290 – 3)

Moll's mockery of men who are (quite literally in the case on Laxton) 'all mouth and no trousers' is acutely disconcerting because of its implication that what is in fact *gendered* behaviour arises as a direct (and inescapable) result of *anatomy*: because he lacks stones (testicles) Laxton is ridiculed by Moll as a 'false' man. Her complete lack of interest in aligning herself with the characters of her biological sex and her desire to act, instead, as a paradigm of assertive and aggressive *masculinity* (that is overblown enough to *shame* men into following through with their own phallic posturing) therefore reveals just how deeply recuperative and counterproductive Moll's character actually is from a feminist perspective.

Jean Howard has attempted to argue that (as she puts it, fortunately for her as a contemporary feminist) there is much more to Moll's representation than this conservative and recuperative aspect – and has therefore maintained that the very fact of Moll's cross-dressing itself "destabilises the very essentialist binarisms that the 'corrective' cross-dresser overtly wishes to uphold". Pinning Moll's radical potentiality on the *double* position that she occupies as erotic object *and* subject, Howard has asserted that, despite being the most highly eroticised figure in the play (she is desired by Sebastian, Laxton and Trapdoor), Moll never actually *subjugates* herself by agreeing to become the mere *object* of masculine affections.³⁴ For Howard, then, it is Moll's *subjectivity* that is paramount to her figuration as a radical force within the play. Her celibacy, auto-eroticism (and what Howard terms the rejection of 'phallus oriented sexuality') allows Moll to critique both social and sexual injustices *from a distance* (as well as to propose possible alternatives to heterosexuality structured along patriarchal lines). Howard points out that, unlike Shakespeare's heroines, Moll Cutpurse does *not* get married at *The Roaring Girl's* conclusion.

Much of this reading of Moll's assertive subjectivity is therefore summed up in the scene in which Moll plays her Viol da Gamba in front of Sebastian Wengrave and Mary Fitzallard (a scene that Howard sees as one of the most erotically charged moments in the play). Howard has claimed that, for her, the most emancipatory moment of the entire play comes when Moll undertakes what Howard calls an extraordinary musical 'masturbation.' Commenting on Moll's 'stroking' and 'fingering' of her Viol da Gamba (in Act IV scene I), Howard has argued that, unlike other staged representations of female musicians:

Moll Cutpurse is even more transgressive in that her instrument is not the lute, able to be tucked decorously beneath the breast, but the viol, played with legs akimbo. Moreover, she seems to appropriate this instrument not so much to make herself an erotic object, as to express her own erotic subjectivity [...] She has and acknowledges her sexual dreams; she has and acknowledges her 'instrument', that viol with which she is so insistently linked, the fingering of which seems to symbolise her skill at clitoral masturbation, as well as her potential skill at manual stimulation of the male penis [...] on the stage [,] when Moll actually plays her instrument [,] what the spectator actually sees is a woman whose strokes and clever fingering occur in the space between her own legs. Her viol suggests her own sexual instrument and her masturbatory playing of it a final defiance of Patriarchal, phallus orientated, sexuality [...] ³⁵

Rather than being autoerotic, however (in that whatever Moll is doing here she is doing it to herself), I aim to argue here that – like so much else surrounding Moll – the stage image that is produced at this moment is actually astonishingly phallogentric; that it is a male-authored fantasy that displays Moll as an (almost pornographic) object of heterosexual masculine desire.

As Gustav Ungerer has shown, the Viol da Gamba was a prominent sexual metaphor in early-modern music and literature; but, in contrast to Howard's reading, it was a metaphor that was intrinsically linked to *male* sexuality (and, there, conceived of in particular relation to acts of *phallic* penetration).³⁶ In a wide-ranging and deft analysis, Ungerer has drawn attention to the sexual undercurrents of Christopher Simpson's musical manual *The Division-Viol, or, The Art of Playing Ex tempore upon a Ground. Divided into Three Parts*, in which the early modern author inadvertently draws attention to the penis-like nature of the viol's neck as he instructs: "Let the top of the viol be erected towards your left shoulder; so, as it may rest your posture, though you touch it not with your hand."³⁷ Ungerer has also pointed out a passage in the section "The Motion of the Right Arm and Wrist" that advises debutants to avoid fluid arm and wrist actions because:

I told you before that you must stretch out your Arm streight, in which posture [playing long Notes] you will necessarily move your shoulder Joint; but if you stir that Joint in quick Notes, it will cause the whole body to shake; which (by all means) must be avoided; as also any other indecent gesture.³⁸

Now, what I want to argue here is that the short, jerky wrist actions and arm movements that Simpson feared his students might produce without careful practice of their bowing technique are better suited (by *far*) to a visual representation of *penile masturbation* than to the sort of 'clitoral manipulation' to which Howard alludes in her reading of this scene – and, therefore, that what Moll is *actually* engaging in here is a sort of two-handed pornographic caress of *both* the phallic neck of her viol (as she runs her hooked fingers over it) *and* of the air (with an equally encircling and stroking bow hand). Indeed, Moll herself implies in the scene itself that it is the *male* member in which she is most profoundly interested as she observes "it shall ne'er be said that I came into a gentleman's chamber and let his instrument hang by the walls!" (IV. I. 85 – 87) – a comment to which Sebastian replies "Why well said, Moll, I' faith; it had been a shame for that gentleman then, that would have let it hang still and ne'er offered it to thee" (IV. I. 89 - 90).

Sebastian certainly seems to be rather turned on by the time that Moll's dextrous hand[i]work has concluded; and he subsequently even describes her to his father as "a musician, sir: one of

excellent fingering [who ...] 'Has the most delicate stroke" (IV. I. 170 and 172). Moreover, in Renaissance literature the erotic valence of the Viol da Gamba was *ubiquitously* linked either to manipulation of the penis (prior to anal or vaginal penetration) or to the act of phallic penetration *itself* – as the erotic riddles of Giovan Francesco Straparola, or the following sonnet by Pierre de Larivey, canon of St-Etienne, demonstrate:³⁹

Je ne le veux celer, quand je me trouve à point,
Je vas veoir mon amy, je le pren, je l'embrasse,
Et si souvent son nerf * entre mes doigts je passe
Que je le fais roidir, ne le voulust il point.

Après, le voyant prest, gaillard et bien en point,
Mes deux cuisses s'ouvrant d'un assez large espace,
Je le mets entre deux, et si bien je le place,
Qu'on ne nous diroit qu'un, tant de près il me joint.

Adonc, d'un maniment frétilard et adextre,
Remuant haut et bas, ore à gauche, ore à dextre,
Entre mille douleurs j'accomply mon désir;
Et si par fois son nerf devient lasche et s'abaisse,
Aveques les deux doigts si bien je le redresse,
Que plus, qu'auparavant j'en tire du plaisir.

* the word 'nerf' in C16th French could be used as a substitute for either 'chord' (string) or 'membre viril' penis.⁴⁰

I don't want to hide it , when I find myself in the mood
I go and see my friend, I take him, I hug him,
And if I pass his string/member* between my fingers
So much as to make it stiff, he doesn't mind at all.

After, seeing him ready, lusty and stiffened up,
Opening my two thighs (a big enough amount)
I put him between them, and if I place him so well
As to make us seem one, so close he is to me,

Then, with a dextrous and quivering motion
Moving up and down, left to right
Between a thousand agonies I pull off my desire;
And if sometimes his string/member* goes floppy
[and shrinks
With my two fingers I straighten it out so well
That I draw even more pleasure from him than before.

References to Viols in Shakespeare, Marston, Jonson and Donne *all* likewise refer to (either homosexual or heterosexual) *phallic* penetration.⁴¹ In addition, while Moll 'masturbates' with her Viol she sings two songs, *both* of which refer to heterosexual sex.

Yet it is not only Moll's songs and viol playing that I consider to rely on heterosexual constructions of erotic contact – and I would now also like to question the degree to which *The Roaring Girl* as a whole undercuts the 'telos of heterosexual 'companionate' marriage', or contains what Howard has posited to be a "submerged and sometimes and overt, resistance to heterosexual coupling." ⁴²

Much of the homoerotic dynamic that is argued to be evident in the play is centred on this Viol da Gamba scene. In it Sebastian kisses his cross-dressed fiancée, Mary, and, as he does so, famously comments to the other cross-dressed figure who accompanies them:

I'd kiss such men to choose, Moll,
Methinks a woman's lip tastes well in a doublet [...]
As some have a conceit their drink tastes better
In an outlandish cup than in our own,
So methinks every kiss she gives me now
In this strange form, is worth a pair of two (IV.I. 46 – 56)

It is a kiss of which Jean Howard has observed:

It is not the [transgressive] context that makes the kiss 'worth a pair of two' [this is the lead-up to Moll's Viol playing and Sebastian is in his father's chamber with his fiancée at this moment. Sir Alexander has also forbidden a marriage between the two young lovers]

but the very fact that Sebastian is kissing what looks, on the outside, like a boy; in sum that his most intense erotic pleasure is what we would now call homoerotic in nature ⁴³

Howard reads Sebastian's kiss as unquestionably homoerotic and has even gone as far as to say:

Framed in accordance with Galenic notions of biology, it is the potential man within the young woman that constitutes the true object of Sebastian's desire. Indeed, the name Sebastian itself in some quarters carried homoerotic connotations in the Renaissance, largely because of the long iconographic tradition of representing the arrow pierced saint and his intimate relationship with Christ as 'an indirect ideal of homo-erotic love.' ⁴⁴

In contrast to Howard, though, I think that this *is* one of those moments on the Renaissance stage in which the transvestism of a boy actor was actually accepted as verisimilitude and that Sebastian is, I think, *fully aware* of the anatomy of his fiancée at this point (in fact, I believe that there is a bawdy play on the sort of 'mind's eye decortication' of the cross-dressed female body that I have hinted at in chapter three, combined with a bawdy reference to Mary Fitzallard's breasts in the line 'this strange form, is worth a pair of two').⁴⁵ Moreover, the eroticism of the scene *is*, I think, largely due to its transgressive inversions of 'father versus son' *power* relations – and that, far from being *homo-erotic*, the *heterosexual telos* of Sebastian and his fiancée Mary's (increasingly inevitable) marriage fully dictates this scene's erotic dynamics. What is a turn-on for Sebastian (and his audience) in this scene is that he is *doubly* getting one over on his *father*; he *pretends* not to realise that Sir Alexander is aware of the cross dressed Moll, yet he *knows* that he really *is* unaware of his actual cross-dressed lover, Mary. Sebastian (who, let us remind ourselves, is after all the well-to-do, virile, young and presumably attractive male hero of this play) is thus at the narrative centre of the scene as much as he is at the centre of its stage; he controls it; he has stage managed it, and it is precisely at this moment that every character (including Moll) is doing what he wants them to: Mary is kissing him, Moll is acting as a pandress (and as a smoke-screen to his father – as well as an erotic piece of distinctly heterosexual pornography) and Sir Alexander is not getting beyond the first layer of any of these deceptions.

In summing up this section, then, I would like to maintain that whilst the disruptive energy and social agency of the assertive cross-dressed woman in *society* was clearly acute, her recuperation into what looks on the surface like sympathetic comedy is, often and in many ways, a rather subtle and nuanced reclamation of a rebellious and threatening figure into something a lot less challenging. Perhaps the real *hic muliers* of London *did* challenge what Howard has called the *telos* of 'heterosexual 'companionate' marriage' – or questioned the instigation and policing of a 'natural' heterosexual progression through of love, courtship and marriage (that concomitantly allowed for the consolidation of wealth through the act of childbearing as a principal mode of patriarchal social control).⁴⁶ In Dekker and Middleton's apparently understanding *Roaring Girl*, however, *hic mulier* appears to be that incarnation of the FTM cross-dresser which delineated her feminist subjectivity as *secondary* to the overall needs of a narrative closure that embraces dynastic heterosexual marriage. Being eroticised through the

assumption of masculine attire perhaps did stir up 'dangerous' homoerotic lusts in men – but far from turning them away from the institution of marriage the evidence of *The Roaring Girl* suggests that such desires could either be performed by women who were prepared to 'ingle' with their husbands *within* the institution, or through *extra*-marital sexual relations with boys or other men. Whilst the clothing that *hic mulier* wore indicated that she had turned her back on a patriarchal teleology that exploited her as currency in the dynastic marriage market and shunted her from daughter, to wife, to mother; the fact that she quickly became read as what Mary Beth Rose has described an object of a "free floating sexuality" repeatedly led, even in the 'play world' of the theatre, to *hic mulier*'s subsumption into semi-pornographic fantasies that relied on her ability to provide polyvalent sexual satisfaction for *men*.⁴⁷

Whilst I do not doubt at all that the real life Mary Frith (and the others who were like her) provided a concrete challenge to both patriarchal institutions and male understandings of femininity; as with many other instances of proto-feminist articulacy, the emergence of such women was followed by staunch attempts at patriarchal recuperation. In 1621, the self-proclaimed 'water poet', John Taylor, showed the degree to which the *Hic Mulier* phenomenon had become an acknowledged part of the London landscape. In *Superbiæ Flagellum, or, The Whip of Pride*, Taylor exasperatedly described one cross-dressed Virago in detail before concluding:

The Dev'll laugh'd lately at the stinking stirr,
We had about Hic Mulier and Hæc Vir
The masculine apparel'd Feminine
And Feminine attired Masculine;
The Woman-man, Man-woman, chose you whether
The Female-male, Male female, both, yet neither [...]
Epigram'd and Satyr'd, whip'd and lerk'd
Cudgel'd and bastinadoed at the court,
And Comically stag'de to make men sport
Iyg'd and (with reason) mock'd in rime [...]

Rather than acceptance of this figure, however, the poet's conclusion reveals the degree of male longing for these figures simply to 'disappear':

That no more time therein my paines I'll spend,
But freely have them to amend, or end.⁴⁸

As I now move into an analysis of the FTM cross-dresser in tragedy, I intend to provide an example of exactly how some such figures met with this 'end'.

III

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*, written in either 1610 or 1611, provides an entirely different perspective on the consequences of female agency as mediated through

The Maides Tragedy.

AS IT HATH BEEN

diuers times Acted at the *Blacke-friers* by
the *KINGS* Maiesties Seruants.



LONDON

Printed for *Francis Constable* and are to be sold
at the white Lyon oueragainst the great North
doore of *Pauls Church*. 1619.

Figure 1

Title Page from *The Maid's Tragedy* (1619)

HIC MULIER:

OR,

The Man-Woman:

Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of
the *Staggers* in the *Masculine-Feminines*
of our Times.

Exprest in a briefe Declamation.

Non omnes possumus omnes.

Mistris, will you be trim'd or truss'd?



London printed for J.T. and are to be sold at *Chancery Lane*. 1620.

Figure 2

Title Page from *Hic Mulier* (1620)

cross-dressed (or cross-gendered) performance.⁴⁹ The title page of the first quarto, printed in 1619 (see fig. 1), graphically demonstrates the catastrophic result of Aspatia's FTM transvestism and offers a somewhat disquieting alternative to the blithe assumption of masculine attire that is to be found on the title page of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet (see fig. 2). The masculine women who are depicted on the *Hic Mulier* frontispiece sit or stand at ease; one of them admires her ruff, hat and feather in a glass, whilst the other gives instructions as to how she will have her hair dressed. The location is an interior (and is possibly therefore a domestic space that was traditionally controlled by women). In this instance, only a small window onto the outside world is indicated by the little lead-lined casement at the exact centre of the page.

The Viragos in this image seem at ease; they are at home, in control; the men who surround them appear to be their servants (or perhaps professionals who have been brought in to perform a particular service prior to these women launching themselves into the wider world outside). Inside, however (and before the women leave this decidedly womb-like interior) the two tiny men who are present seem to offer a subtle forewarning about the emasculating powers of *hic mulier*. One of them, although fully standing, rises only to the head-height of the woman who is seated to his right, whilst the other (who is possibly a boy) is so diminutive that his head reaches only to the midriff of the figure that he attends. Moreover, in

addition to being tiny, the barber – or possibly tailor – who stands to the left of this woodcut is triply effeminised. Despite having both a beard and a moustache, his hair is bobbed into a bun, his apron covers his hose (making them appear more like skirts) and his scissors constitute a further ornamentation that connects him to female industry and anatomy. Because this man's shears call to mind both hairdressing and textile work, they function as a subtle signifier of feminine labour, yet they *also* visually inscribe an unequivocally non-phallic cross that makes metaphorical reference to female anatomy and – because scissors both 'cut' and make 'cuts' – also suggests the well-known Renaissance slang word for the female genitalia that Gail Paster has recently brought to critical attention in her splendid reading of Maria's forged letter in *Twelfth Night* (in which she identifies the scatological significances of Olivia's supposed 'great 'P's' and explains the anatomical implications of the "C's, U's and T's" on which Malvolio chooses to focus so intently).⁵⁰ In the light of such evidence, then, the *Hic Mulier* woodcut can be seen to constitute a striking visual inscription of male anxiety concerning inverted gender-relations and masculine insignificance.

By means of contrast, the frontispiece to *The Maid's Tragedy* seems to delineate a deeply disturbing re-inscription of aggressive masculine authority. The scene takes place outdoors; its protagonists have therefore been thrust out into the exterior domain that was traditionally controlled by men. At its centre lies Amintor's extended sword, captured in the first moments of a brutal entry just below the carefully shaped curve of Aspatia's left breast (and this is one of those interesting instances where one *can* make out a woman's breasts on a Renaissance play-text's frontispiece).⁵¹ Both Amintor's hand and his arm (representatives of male authority and agency) seem to be fused with the martial and unequivocally phallic symbol of his sword. Moreover, since this woodcut illustration appears underneath a printed play-title whose large letters draw careful attention to Aspatia's status as a '*maid*', the 1619 quarto's readers must have been inescapably drawn to speculate on the obvious (and defloration based) symbolism of Aspatia's blood as it is captured spurting forth from her body at the moment in which she is penetrated by her troth-plight husband's foil. In addition (and further augmenting this woodcut's visual inscription of the sexually aggressive male), the fact that Amintor's hat (complete with the sort of effeminising plume that is to be seen on the *Haec Vir* frontispiece) lies discarded on the floor behind his feet would seem to hint at his abandonment of the effeminising preoccupation with feathers that so emasculated *haec vir* and rendered him womanish. Aspatia's hat, on the other hand (also containing a feather and looking just like that of Moll Cutpurse in the 1611 woodcut to *The Roaring Girl*, like those on the heads of the cross-dressers of the *Hic Mulier* frontispiece, or even that belonging to Anne of Denmark in the 1617 Paul Van Somer portrait of the Queen in hunting gear), sits firmly on her head – therefore connecting her to a potent contemporaneous symbol of female challenges to patriarchal authority. It would therefore seem reasonable to conclude that, as well as its obvious relationship to the events of this play, *The Maid's Tragedy's* frontispiece also had wider cultural resonances as a result of its depiction of a man casting off his effeminate sumptuary trappings and viciously putting a cross-dressed *hic-mulier* figure in her place.

Prior to *The Maid's Tragedy*, Beaumont had written a satirical comedy, *The Woman Hater*, for Paul's Children (in around 1606). It is a play that has recently been interpreted as a direct response to the misogyny of contemporary anti-feminist invectives. As I hope to have shown in my analysis of *The Maid's Tragedy's* title-page, however (and from the subtle interplay between anatomy, phallogentric masculine aggression and the re-inscription of patriarchal dominance over the female body that I intend to highlight in my reading of the play to follow), the tone, characterisation, plot and central narrative thrust of *The Maid's Tragedy* do little to support any notion of 'proto-feminism' or sexual emancipation in Beaumont's subsequent collaboration with Fletcher for the King's Men at the Blackfriars.

The Maid's Tragedy begins with an ostensibly expository scene for which the actual sub-textual purpose is, I want to suggest, a conspicuous gendering of the play's dramatic characters (and perhaps even of the various different types of 'acting' that existed in the early modern period). Privileging the stage presence and voice of its male characters, act 1 scene 1 of the play commences by furnishing its men with dramatic 'world enough and time' to delineate some of the explicit contrasts that they perceive to exist between virile (and martial) constructions of masculinity and (in direct contrast to them) the fawning flattery of female characters (or feminised men) who remain unseen and are linked to the obsequious sycophancy of stylised and choreographed performances in the court masque. At the top of the scene, Cleon, Strato, Lysippus, Diphilus and Melantius accordingly pit battle against ballet and – in the process – set up a bifurcated hierarchy of both anatomical sexes and dramatic art-forms (in which the Blackfriars' audience are made to observe a group of adult male players – who are manifestly acting out a play in front of them – as they dismiss the theatrical form of the masque – and, possibly therefore, female performance – as an effeminate and inferior genre of entertainment). Moreover, Melantius (who is quickly established as the noble and dignified warrior who has brought peace to Rhodes: "Thou that with blood buyest us our peace" (l.l. 14)) then proceeds to further set out the gendered divisions of his society as he surreptitiously augments them: according to this heroic soldier, the ineluctable facticity of military *action* is to be extolled above the mere indolence of *speech acts* and, in a premonitory invocation of the violence that is later to come, the noble warrior confesses: "these scratched limbs of mine / Have spoke my love and truth unto my friends / More than my tongue e'er could." ⁵²

From the start, then, *The Maid's Tragedy* appears to set up an opposition between male and female characters that relies upon an apparent incompatibility between heroic ideals of masculine *action* (as embodied in notions of the idealised, virile, masculine *corpus* and which tap into Classical Greek paradigms of the youthful warrior's body) and feminine *affectation* (as embodied in activities such as excessive speech, participation in nuptial festivities, dancing and the masque). Diphilus – who is a foil for Melantius in as much as he is the warrior's brother – is therefore made to confess, somewhat shamefully, that he could not take part in the wars that

defended his country because of participation in the current wedding celebrations; it is – let us face it – a pretty lame excuse for not going to war.

When Lysippus attempts to invite Melantius back into the mannered world of the court by inviting the warrior to dance (“We have a masque tonight / And you must tread a soldier’s measure” (l.l. 39/40)), he consequently draws a response in which the dominance of military action over courtly entertainment is emphatically underscored:

Melantius. These soft and silken wars are not for me:
The music must be shrill and all confused
That stirs my blood, and then I dance with arms.
(l.l. 41 – 43)

Despite the terrible pun, Melantius’ exchange of ‘arms’ (i.e. weapons) for legs is worth dwelling upon (if only briefly) because it reveals the subtle collapse of male anatomy onto aggressive (and preponderantly phallic) weaponry that I consider to be central to an anatomical (and gender-conscious) reading of this play. As I hope to have hinted at in my analysis of the visual evidence of the play’s frontispiece, Amintor’s sword will eventually become fused with his body in a final act of phallic aggression that is directed towards his rejected fiancée in the play’s last scene; yet here too (and as early as its first) an idealised warrior’s sword is set up as an extension (perhaps even a part) of his masculine anatomy.

As the play’s archetype of heroic virility, Melantius claims that he is articulate only with his sword, not with his mouth; yet what is perhaps more significant than this somewhat startling assertion is the fact that Melantius’ soldierly conflation of masculine anatomy with aggressive weaponry is immediately followed by an equally conspicuous homo-erotic homily on male friendship – in which Amintor’s admiration and respect for his older mentor is extolled precisely *because* it is mediated through an erotic enthrallment with an idealised figuration of the male body. Melantius’ discourse on friendship passes effortlessly from removed awe, to ocular fascination with his own body and then (after an attempt to pick out one specific ‘limb’) to a sensual and tactile exploration of his rather phallic sword:

Melantius. All joys upon him, for he is my friend.
Wonder not that I call a man so young my friend:
His worth is great [...] When he was a boy,
As oft as I returned [...] He would gaze upon me
And view me round, to find in what one limb
The virtue lay to do those things he heard;
Then would he wish to see my sword, and feel
The quickness of the edge, and in his hand
Weigh it; he oft would make me smile at this.
His youth did promise much, and his ripe years
Will see it all performed.
(l.l. 45 – 58)

Interestingly, then, it is at this point – in the middle of a highly-charged (and as I have asserted profoundly homo-erotic) invocation of masculinity that centres on a martial figuration of male anatomy (that appears to translate one special ‘limb’ into a keenly sharpened sword and, incidentally, also taps into figurations of the ancient Greek *erastes/eromenos* relationship between two generations of men, in which the noble elder tutored a youthful boy) – that the scene is punctuated, and the playing space transgressively penetrated, by three women.

As Aspatia and her two waiting-women enter this all-male world, they rapidly reveal the fact that inter-sex relations appear to be a current problem-area in Rhodes. The marriage between Aspatia and her would-be husband, Amintor, has been compromised by the King’s desire to honour Melantius and, as the heroic warrior congratulates Aspatia on her forthcoming marriage, the play’s spectators are informed (both by Aspatia’s reaction and by Lysippus commentary) that the King has arranged instead for Amintor to marry Melantius’ sister, Evadne. Rather than dwelling on the consequences of the situation for either his sibling (or for Aspatia), however, Melantius directly reveals that his conception of the problem is limited to a uniquely male sphere. After once more highlighting the difficulties that he has with male-to-female communication (and as he does so objectifying Aspatia: “I am sad / My speech bears so infortunate a sound / To beautiful Aspatia” (l.l. 81 – 82)), Melantius outlines an understanding of the problem that exists in purely patriarchal terms. For him, the dilemma is principally a concern for the play’s men:

Melantius. There is rage
 Hid in her father’s breast, Calianax,
 Bent long against me, and a’ should not think,
 If I could call it back, that I would take
 So base revenges as to scorn the state
 Of his neglected daughter [...]

(l.l. 83 – 88)

Playing on preoccupations with dynastic marriage (because Calianax is an aging Lord with no son – or at least no son present in Rhodes – and is therefore a noble for whom the only chance to propagate his dynastic fortunes lies in marrying his daughter off to a patrician such as Amintor), Melantius evidently seems more concerned to highlight the position of Aspatia’s *father* (and his own relations with him) than that of the eponymous tragic heroine herself.⁵³ Moreover, Lysippus’ subsequent description of Aspatia (and, in particular, her reaction to being passed over in the dynastic marriage market) does little more to paint a positive image of her agency – since he merely trots off a lacklustre and clichéd evocation of spineless rejected female lovers from Ariadne to Dido:

Lysippus. [...] This lady
 Walks discontented, with her watry eyes
 Bent on the earth. The unfrequented woods
 Are her delight, and when she sees a bank
 Struck full of flowers she with a sight will tell
 Her servants what a pretty place it were
 To bury lovers in, and make her maids
 Pluck ‘em and strow her over like a corpse [...]

(l.l. 89 – 96)

More like a 'Mad Ophelia' than a 'Mad Moll', then, the dejected Aspatia appears to be cast off by the play's men in her very first scene. She is relegated to the ranks of stock, betrayed and unrequited female lovers and is subsequently left almost entirely out of the dramatic picture, in order to mope around the play's fringes in a state of self-indulgent and self-pitying melancholia; until she finally expires as part of the play's deeply misogynistic finale. As a result, Aspatia is, to all intents and purposes, killed-off *at this point* by Lysippus (for his speech renders her a 'cor[p]se') and she is thereby metaphorically executed some four-and-a-half acts before her actual (corporal) assassination is accomplished by Amintor. The major action of this play – it or so it would seem at this point at least – is to be reserved for its men.

What I want to suggest here is that, despite occasional flickers of female agency (such as Evadne's refusal to have sex with her husband, her regicide, or Aspatia's cross-dressing at the play's end) the principal representations of femininity that *The Maid's Tragedy* has to offer are, for the main part, obdurate in their patriarchal intransigence. The play repeatedly endeavours to present women simply as either rapacious sexual objects, or as virginal currency in a dynastic marriage market and, once Aspatia has fulfilled her expository function as 'the woman scorned', she is therefore swiftly pushed to the play's dramatic sidelines (just as Evadne will later be marginalised once she has murdered the King in act V on behalf of Melantius and Amintor). Whilst *The Maid's Tragedy* does inarguably present occasional *glimpses* of female agency, then (such as Aspatia's transvestism or Evadne's withholding of sexual favours from Amintor), it repeatedly refuses to *sustain* or *develop* the radical possibilities that are raised by its 'female-authored' actions; nor does it use them to put forward any alternative gender *models*, preferring instead to relegate any notions of 'proto-feminism', female articulacy or sexual autonomy that such actions might raise to its ideological side-lines and repeatedly attempting to relocate women in positions of subordinancy within recuperative and conservative patriarchal taxonomies of gender.

Act III scene I, for example (which comes immediately *after* Evadne's assertive denial of sexual intercourse with Amintor), contains some astonishingly misogynist views on sisters, wives and mothers in which a pair of male characters are made to offer each other glances of the possible sexual pleasures that are available with the three standard figurations of femininity within a patriarchal nuclear family: the wife, mother and sister:

- Diphilus. What odds he has not my sister's maidenhead tonight
- Strato. None: it's odds against any bridegroom living,
he ne'er gets it while he lives ⁵⁴
- Diphilus. Y'are merry with my sister: you'll please allow me the
same freedom with your mother.
- Strato. She's at your service

Diphilus. Then she's merry enough of herself, she needs no
tickling [...]

(III. I. 4 - 11)

Interjections such as this are short, their bawdy intentions obvious (and feminist readings of this play might well attempt to underscore the way in which they reveal the bravado and *insecurity* behind certain patriarchal masculine assumptions about sex once they are set against Evadne's more radical actions), yet they *also* repeatedly assert *conservative* ideas of female sexual objectivity – they outline a baseline figuration of the female body that centres around its sexual availability. Consequently, they go a good way towards undermining the radical potential of any of the actions undertaken by women that precede them.

In another significant example, before the wedding masque that forms the spectacular centrepiece of Act I, the audience are made privy to the argument that Melantius has predicted between himself and Calianax. It is an exchange in which the opportunity to hear a female voice is offered, yet is once again denied in favour of an unchallenged male construction of the whorish female body. Ostensibly arising from the on-going animosity between these two male characters, a dispute arises between Calianax and Melantius that is significant because it revolves around the sexual and moral standing of an anonymous woman with whom the soldier has arrived. In the light of some rather shameful accusations of whoredom from Calianax however (and just like the mute Hero in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*), the lady who accompanies Melantius doth not protest *at all* – and it is therefore not until the second act of the play that *The Maid's Tragedy's* audience are finally invited to witness its first sustained representation of femininity: it comes in the intriguing undressing scene in which Aspatia, and various other attendant ladies, strip Evadne in preparation for her wedding-night.

IV

For the first time in *The Maid's Tragedy*, act II scene I presents action that purports to take place within an enclosed, private and exclusively female environment. What is fascinating about this scene, then, is not the fact that it presents an *alternative* gender viewpoint, but the fact that the very first lines of this supposedly 'all-female' action contain metaphors that directly equate sexual intercourse (and the intimate meeting of male and female anatomies that it implies) with acts of war. The undressing of Evadne in this scene is moderately bawdy, and the actors who are required to perform in it are called upon to make some distinctly un-lady-like observations; Dula (one of Evadne's ladies-in-waiting and a character with a dramaturgically convenient yet somewhat out-of-control tongue) thus inquires of Evadne: "Madam, shall we undress you for this fight? / The wars are nak'd that you must make tonight." (II.I. 1 - 2).

The fact that, as soon as they *are* given a voice, the play's women appear to shore up the stringent gender divisions that have previously been articulated by its men (and even go so far as to equate sexual intercourse with aggressive combat) is certainly significant (especially in the light of the play's violent conclusion); yet it should not really startle critics (or audiences) all that much, because, of course – in the realities of both authorship and dramatic presentation – the undressing of Evadne is just another example of the sort of male-authored 'female' fiction that Juliet Fleming has recently described as:

appropriative ([in that it] embod[ies] and activat[es] a variety of strategies in the struggle to control and deploy cultural meanings), and, more specifically, *transvestite* (for while its author associates himself with a set of attributes that he represents as "female" that association rarely changes or compromises the real and symbolic allegiances he possesses as a male).⁵⁵

In the light of Fleming's astute observations about the ways in which male-authored prose texts often masquerade as 'female' in order to surreptitiously shore-up the taxonomies of gender that suit patriarchal social structures and modalities of thought, one may begin to see the ways in which the *dramatic* undressing of Evadne that follows in this scene (with all of its attendant bawdy) exists simply in order to reinforce the supposed incompatibilities of gender that have already been articulated by the play's principal male characters. Indeed, viewed from this perspective, the entire purpose of this undressing scene seems to revolve around an adroit reversal of Freud's scenario for the telling of dirty jokes (a phenomenon that, as Jane Gallop has observed, objectifies women because it "originates in a mythical scene between a man and a woman, [but] never takes place except between two men.")⁵⁶ Here, of course, it is the play's supposedly 'female' characters who are used in order to put forward a plethora of male-authored sexual jokes in an environment that professes to be uniquely female but is, in every sense, exclusively male (despite the scene's obvious attempts to cloak its gender bias with humorous metatheatrical assertions such as Evadne's "there is no modesty / When we're alone" (II.i. 11 – 12) – a line that, in actual fact, and like so much else in the scene, draws even *more* attention to the fact that performers onstage are never 'alone' and therefore goes some way towards revealing the histrionic artifice of the play's transvestite constructions of femininity).

The point about the discernible nature of the transvestism in this scene is, I think, deeply significant because although it 'pretends' to be just about women, act II scene I does not shy away from toying with the metatheatrical implications of its cross-dressed performances and, at times, it even makes its transvestism quite explicit. When Evadne, for example, protests "You prick me, lady" (II.i. 13) (a line that is ostensibly said to a lady-in-waiting who might well have a pin in her hand), the observation immediately prompts a bawdy response that plays against the male bodies that are underneath all of the female costumes on this stage (because Dula instantly responds: "Anon you must endure more and lie still; / You're best to practice" (II.i. 15 – 16)). The scene is certainly playful; it is erotic and acts as a kind of verbal prologue to the sex that is later expected to happen offstage (it accordingly plays with the obvious tensions that exist between promises of sexual activity and an audience's knowledge that such scenes can never actually be

staged; it is what Kathleen McLuskie has termed “[the] kind of scene [that] should culminate in sex but will always avoid it in view of what is possible on stage”.⁵⁷ However, what I would like to argue here is that act II scene I of *The Maid's Tragedy* doesn't actually *avoid* sex at all, and that – far from being a replacement *for* (or an alternative *to*) sex – its free and easy verbal foreplay is designed to perform two distinctly sexual functions, because:

(i) On a narrative level, it prepares Evadne (as it tries to excite her) for her subsequent sexual ‘performance’ with Amintor. It is foreplay, or, as Dula puts it: “A dozen wanton words [that] put in your head / Will make you livelier in your husband's bed” (II.I. 20 – 21)

and

(ii) On a specular (and speculative) level it actually *provides* a fair amount of the sex (that is impossible to ‘act out’ on stage) in the *minds’ eyes* of theatrical spectators – and this by means of its overtly sexualised language and metaphorical imagery.

What I am attempting to argue, then, is that this scene is in fact *doubly* pornographic: it seeks to objectify the female body in the sex-acts that it metaphorically represents (events during which women must notably ‘lie still’ and ‘endure’ – and for which they must first be coerced into action up with ‘wanton words’ that will make them ‘livelier’ than they are by nature), yet it also fulfils that other general requirement of pornography: the provision of sexually explicit images (in the *imaginings* of its theatrical spectators). What seems to me to be even *more* fascinating about this scene, however (and this is a point to which I will later return), is the fact that, whilst it unquestionably reveals the earthy sexuality of Dula's mind through some rather choice phrases (and employs metaphors and imagery that conjure up sexual activity for its audience) it also – and on a *literal* level this time – actually reveals the *anatomy* of the boy-actor playing Evadne as ‘her’ ladies-in-waiting proceed with an on-stage undressing of their ‘bride’ (who has, after all, tantalised ‘her’ audience at the top of the scene with the double-edged promise “I am soon undone” (II.I. 7)).⁵⁸

Act II scene I of *The Maid's Tragedy* seems to me to be all about substitutions and exchanges. It replaces female characters with boy-actors, servants with mistresses, husbands with lovers, private intimacy with public display. In such a context, even the performance of a role such as ‘wife’ seems to be as interchangeable as almost any other on stage. Evadne thus first offers her place to Dula (“Wilt take my place tonight?” (II.I. 26)) and then to Aspatia (“Aspatia, take her part” (II.I. 28)). When, however, Evadne proposes this substitution of nuptial bodies with Aspatia, the tenor of the scene suddenly appears to shift from erotic bawdy to melancholic righteousness and, as Evadne exchanges pleasantries with Amintor's troth-plight wife (the woman whom Kathleen McLuskie has called “an emblem of wronged virginity [throughout most of the play's action]”) the scene's playfully lewd tone immediately breaks down into a declaration of Aspatia's love for Amintor and an articulation of the erotic causes of her abject dejection.⁵⁹ Aspatia complains:

This should have been
My night, and all your hands have been employed
In giving me a spotless offering
To young Amintor's bed (II.I. 44 - 47)

What is fascinating about the shift in tone that is brought about by Aspatia at this point, though, is the way in which, whilst it is certainly not bawdy, it is still manages to be deeply *voyeuristic*. Even in her expression of rejection, Aspatia's focus is upon the *performance* of sexual acts in the marriage bed that forms both the *telos* (and the imaginative *locus*) of this scene. Notwithstanding her change of tone, then, Aspatia maintains this dramatic unit's emphasis upon an ocular fascination with heterosexual sex, and allows the scene to return – time and time again – to both the *site* in which sex acts occur and to the *bodies* that will (or should) perform them. Significantly, too, when Aspatia metaphorically tenders herself to Amintor here, it is as a passive 'offering' at the altar of male desire. Even as she hints at her 'death' and asks Dula to recollect her ("Remember me; thou shalt perceive a fire / Shot suddenly into thee" (II.I. 61 – 2)), her melancholy request contains a sexual undertone that directly alludes to *male* sexual gratification in orgasm and ejaculation – a fact that is not altogether lost on Dula, who laughingly replies "Let 'em shoot anything but fire, and / I fear 'em not" (II.I. 64 – 5).

The waiting ladies and Aspatia thus all seem to act as sexualised intermediaries (and possible sexual options) through whom Amintor may pass before finally being delivered to his idealised bride, Evadne. When he finally does appear, Aspatia consequently once again intervenes between this man and his wife, in order to inform her troth-plight husband of her imminent 'death' as a result of his rejection. Aspatia's performance of the jilted lover is consummate, yet it is also highly *sexualised*:

Aspatia. Go, and be happy in your lady's love.
 May all the wrongs that you have done to me
 Be utterly forgotten in my death!
 I'll trouble you no more, Yet I will take
 A parting kiss, and will not be denied. [Kisses him]
 You'll come, my lord, and see the virgins weep
 When I am laid in earth, though you yourself
 Can know no pity? Thus I wind myself
 Into this willow garland, and am prouder
 That I was once your love, though now refused,
 Than to have had another true to me.
 So with my prayers I leave you, and must try
 Some yet unpractised way to grieve and die [...]
 (II.I. 119 - 124)

Whilst (on the surface at least) Aspatia's speech revolves entirely around concepts of wronged virginity (and plays on her supposedly snow-white innocence), the underlying significance of this address is given away by the curious (indeed somewhat momentous) corporal response that it somehow prompts in Amintor – because Aspatia's words seem to rock her troth-plight husband to his skeletal foundation:

Amintor. I did that lady wrong. Methinks I feel
 Her grief shoot suddenly through all my veins; [...]
 My eyes run [...]
 Timorous flesh,
 Why shakst thou so? (II.I. 127 - 137)

At first glance, Amintor's reaction seems overblown (it even goes as far as to reverse the references to ejaculation that have only recently so amused Dula – since it is now our wronged virgin who is 'shooting' substances into her troth-plight husband's body). Deeper analysis of Aspatia's (of course deliberately sexed and gendered) semantic choices, however, reveals exactly *why* such an effect is brought about in her would-be husband.

Just as the audience have previously witnessed Evadne being somewhat sexually 'laid' in her marriage bed (in their minds' eyes at least; because Dula's insistence to Evadne earlier in the scene "Nay, we must see you laid" (II.I. 89) refers – on a literal level – to the tradition of seeing a bride to bed, and then departing; but – on a more voyeuristic and conjectural one – it also evokes an image of the nuptial bed *together with* the rites that are to be performed within it, since the word 'lay' had a recognised meaning in the Renaissance as a verb: 'to dispose a woman in a coital posture, or to coit with' and as a noun: 'sexual object or whore'), so they are now invited to witness Aspatia, too, being 'laid' in her 'grave'.⁶⁰ Aspatia's speech leads towards a sexualised climax (in that it concludes with a rhyming couplet that reinforces its last word: she "must try / Some yet unpractised way to grieve and *die*"). Such a juxtaposition of the well-known metaphor for orgasm against the anguish that Aspatia feels as a result of Amintor's rejection clearly highlights the masochistic and auto-erotic nature of her heartache; but what is conceivably even *more* significant than this is the fact that Aspatia's reference to 'death' earlier in this speech, and to being 'laid' in the earth, taps into a complex linguistic nexus that has surrounded sex, graves and marriage-beds for centuries; and that she thus cleverly manages to transpose herself – metaphorically at least – with her rival Evadne, so as to actually achieve what she so desires. Aspatia places herself as 'a spotless offering / [in] young Amintor's bed.'

Ever since classical times, the marriage bed and the grave have been inextricably intertwined in their linguistic and literary incarnations. Aeschylus, for example, played on the dual meanings of the Greek word *κήδος* (that signifies both marriage and mourning) in his *Agamemnon*; and metaphorical use of *θαλαμος* (meaning bride-chamber) for the grave can be seen in the Renaissance (and modern) Italian *tàlamo* (meaning marriage-bed, but still retaining a dialect sense of 'catafalque').⁶¹ Shakespeare's *Isabella*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* were also none of them unaware of this connection – they all conflate death with beds (and in the case of *Antony*, it is even a marriage bed that he 'runs to' as his grave).⁶² So then – and this is the point that I really want to stress – in her evocation of an imminent interment, Aspatia shrewdly manages to trade places with Evadne and situates (or – to use her own, sexualised, word – 'lays') her body in a site that is inseparably linked with the conjugal bed that her rival is (notionally at least) about to occupy. Moreover, in the very act of doing so (and despite her professed melancholia) Aspatia is remarkably pro-active and assertive: she 'takes' a kiss from Amintor and her body penetrates a grave that has been metaphorically dug in feminised 'earth.'⁶³

Such a metaphorical expression of what looks like sexual agency (even in dejection) is hard to square with standard readings of *The Maid's Tragedy* in which the play's two heroines are generally interpreted as imperfect halves of a complete – and 'perfect' – male psyche (or, in the Renaissance terminology of Plato's *Phaedrus*, the morally strong woman that male reason should desire and the sensual woman that male passion actually, yet foolishly, does). Anne M. Haselkorn has recently justified readings of the play that place Evadne and Aspatia at extreme poles of the spectrum that separates the virginal from the whoreish, and has explained the seeming paradox that exists in early modern juxtapositions of paragons of purity against enticing strumpets in terms of Freudian psychology. She has observed:

[When b]loodless heroines are juxtaposed with attractively seductive females who defy society's conventions [... a] simple Freudian explanation for this paradox is that the virtuous woman reflects the male's "superego" or inhibitory tendencies, and the sexual woman represents his libidinal or "id" tendencies. The chaste woman is identified with positive acts in a man's life, whereas the sexual woman arouses him and tends to encourage sinful behaviour.⁶⁴

William Schullenberger has likewise stated:

Aspatia and Evadne are inverse images of each other. Aspatia is the passively suffering abandoned woman who dresses like a man as if male clothing brings with it aggressive behaviour. Evadne is the sexually aggressive woman who determines the fate of men [...]⁶⁵

Whilst I broadly accept both these critics' findings, I would also like to posit the notion here that such absolute and rectilinear accounts of either woman seem to belie their somewhat more nuanced and subtle characterisations (and that they therefore undermine the greater degree of dramatic *variation* that occasionally seems to exist for both women and is exploited by Beaumont and Fletcher); because, despite her overt sexuality and vengeful aggression, Evadne succumbs to the influence (and eventually becomes compliant with the wishes) of every single patriarchal authority figure to approach her during the course of *The Maid's Tragedy*; and (as we have just seen and will again witness in act v) despite her apparently repressive passivity, Aspatia occasionally challenges preconceived ideas about sexuality, dress and gender, and exhibits several unambiguous moments of agency during the course of this play.

What I *don't* want to assert is that this multiplicity, 'variation', or increased depth to both of *The Maid's Tragedy's* principal female characters (the fact that there is more to this pair than a 'Virgin Mary versus Mary Magdalene' paradox) constitutes a true sense of 'subjectivity' for either woman (or the fact that they occasionally seem to exercise pro-active control over their own actions as a result of any proto-feminist intentions on behalf of their creators). Indeed, what I am attempting to assert is, instead, quite the reverse – since what I think Aspatia's agency is in actual fact achieving at this moment is an 'offering' to Amintor that is a *compliant alternative* to the rejection that he is unaware of (but which is about to follow during his wedding-night with Evadne). Aspatia's apparent assertiveness (in taking a kiss and metaphorically inserting herself in Amintor's wedding bed) is therefore profoundly *recuperative* because it offers an image of Aspatia as the acquiescent, submissive and, crucially, *sexually available* wife that Amintor *could*

have had. Moreover (and central to my argument), it comes just before Amintor is presented with Evadne in her incarnation as the self-governing strumpet. This 'emblem of wronged virginity' is, consequently, metaphorically 'dying' for Amintor at this moment (with all of that word's sexual overtones) precisely so that her acquiescent presence can later be used to augment the monstrous nature of the recalcitrant bride with whom Amintor is about to be saddled ... But before I look at the grotesque inversion of the traditional wife that Evadne is set to offer Amintor, I want to dwell for a little while longer on one or two of Evadne's own 'variations' – and on some of her own more conspicuous compliances with patriarchal authority.

On a narrative level, the facts about Evadne would appear to be simple: firstly, she whores herself when she consents to yield her maidenhead to the symbolic head of her patriarchal society (the King) and, subsequently, she submits to the authority of her husband (Amintor) and her brother (Melantius) as she eventually become their "instrument" (V.i. 139) in a plot to kill their monarch. Significantly, too, when Melantius persuades Evadne to kill her lover, it is the supreme image of *patriarchal* authority, their father, that he invokes in order to rouse his sister into action:

Evadne. Let me consider

Melantius. Do, whose child thou wert,
 Whose honour thou hast murdered, whose grave
[opened,
 And so pull'd on the gods, that in their justice
 They must restore him flesh again and life,
 And raise his dry bones to revenge this scandal [...]
(IV.i. 88 – 92)

The apparition that Melantius calls up in the persuasion scene has a particular resonance with the ghost of Hamlet's father (and it therefore plays upon a discretely *gendered* revenge tradition to which I will later briefly return) but it also slots the last male figurehead into place in this play's jigsaw of conventional gender relations. Accordingly, it clearly augments Evadne's apparent unwillingness (or inability) to question the four exemplary figures of Renaissance masculine authority: a King, father, husband and brother.

So why does Evadne replace the compliant Aspatia in order to challenge suppositions about virginity when she denies Amintor's desires on her wedding-night if, like the play's wronged-virgin, she is really just a pawn in the hands of the play's patriarchs? Why does she subsequently kill the King her lover? Well, I think that part of the answer at least lies in the way that Evadne is allowed brief moments of agency in this play because they allow her to be put forward (just like Moll Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl*) as a sort of monstrous *parody* of the 'masculine-woman' who can then be used to reveal the absence of any real sense of virility in the puffed up bravado of the play's principal male characters (and that Evadne is therefore a dramatic device that is intended to alert the men in the Blackfriars' audience to the inevitable consequences of the sort of gender reversals that *will* be transgressively acted out at the expense of – indeed as a *direct result of* – the effeminacy of any non-virile man).

As several critics have observed, the central 'problem' of *The Maid's Tragedy* lies in the character of the King: it is he who transgresses the moral order, whores his supreme soldier's sister and cuckolds one of his best-loved courtiers. Yet it is not the virile and masculine soldiers and nobles of Rhodes (who really *should* revenge themselves upon their monarch if they are the martial, bellicose and pugnacious men that they claim to be) but rather Evadne – a weak and feeble woman – who does so. As such, she enacts a gender reversal that graphically demonstrates the degree of effeminisation that has rendered even the mighty warriors of Rhodes powerless and has incapacitated the very figures who purport to be the most aggressive and assertive figures in the play. Like *hic mulier* in the *Haec Vir* pamphlet, then, Evadne's transgressive agency (and the tragic consequences that will shortly be seen to arise from it) come to pass as a *direct result* of the fact that the play's *men* don't *act* as they should.

Shullenberger has commented (in relation to the play's development of its masque symbolism) that:

The King's failure becomes not merely a symbol of the social disorder of the play, but the center of those shock waves which disturb the moral and emotional poise of all the characters. He infects the court with lust, greed, and deceit, undermining the order of which he is supposed to be keeper. His office thus links him to the solar hierarchy, but his actions betray that status, and rank him with the slimy Boreas of the masque. Yet even with his corruption exposed, the King retains enough mythic authority to paralyse the other male characters of the play. His ritual murder is accomplished not by the chief soldiers of his court, who have the cause and the power to do so, but by Evadne, whose conscience is not constrained by the taboo against regicide which inhibits the men. Only Evadne is not mesmerised by "that sacred name / 'The King'" (II.i. 305 – 306), and her death strokes enact Night's revenge against the masculine hierarchy of the solar god even as they drive to the heart of the corruption of the dramatic universe.⁶⁶

Whilst this observation is doubtless true, what seems to me to be even *more* significant than the simple *fact* that the play's men are 'paralysed', is the way in which they are rendered incapable of action and the *manner* in which the revenge plot of *The Maid's Tragedy* is therefore carried out as a highly *sexualised* and anatomically *gendered* act by Evadne. I therefore consider that, as Evadne denies sex to Amintor, or kills her lover the King, she is temporarily allowed to assume the mantle of masculine 'action' – that has been so carefully set up by the first two acts of the drama – so that she can be employed as a *critique* of men who do *not* act (in just in the same way that Aspatia will later assume male attire as a visual signifier of her own gender transgression). As I now hope to demonstrate, Evadne's initial desire to control her sex-life – and her subsequent act of retribution against the King – are *both* set up in distinctly *male* anatomical terms – and this is where I want to come back to the metatheatrical interplay between the boy actor's body and the histrionic nature of Evadne's femininity that I left off discussing in my earlier analysis of act II scene I.

When Evadne denies Amintor his conjugal rights on their wedding-night, one may only guess as to the degree of nakedness that was required of the boy actor who initially played her. The

quarto-text that survives certainly implies a distinct lack of clothing and, by the time our bride and groom are 'alone,' Amintor observes:

O, my Evadne, spare
That tender body; let it not take cold
The vapours of the night shall not fall here:
To bed, my love; hymen will punish us
For being slack performers of his rites.

(II.i. 140 – 44)

As well as drawing obvious attention to the semi-nakedness of the boy actor who is now performing, Amintor's lines also reinforce the notion that Evadne's future actions will be a 'performance.' He inevitably therefore draws attention to the histrionic nature of her femininity (even as he brings a second boy's body into the equation through a sub-textual invocation of the deity Hymen). As the scene progresses towards Evadne's withholding of sexual intercourse from her new husband (what Kathleen McLuskie has called her "[s]how-stopping declaration: "A Maidenhead, Amintor, / At my years?" (II.i. 194)), this scene's dramatic language consequently begins to play around with the different levels of consciousness and *performance* that are on display. Vacillating between verisimilitude and an explicit revelation of the *artifice* of its transvestism, the language of the wedding-night scene constantly hints at the different levels of seeming, performing and deceiving that are on display. Things are most definitely not quite what they appear to be:

Amintor. Thou canst not dress thy face in such a look
But I shall like it

Evadne. What look likes you best?

Amintor. Why do you ask?

Evadne That I may show you one less pleasing to you.

Amintor. I prithee, put thy jests in milder looks;
It shows as thou wert angry.

Evadne. So perhaps
I am indeed [...]

(II.i. 163 - 170)

Evadne's language here underscores the playing of roles; she is unwilling to commit herself to any notion of veracity, truth or absolutism in the scene – and her relentless insistence on the fact that she is 'acting', renders the whole experience somewhat dream-like for Amintor ("I dream - awake, Amintor! (II.i. 208)). Moreover, as Evadne changes the way that she *genders* herself in front of her husband (in that she transforms from an obedient maid to an assertive, sexualised strumpet who reveals her lack of sexual desire for Amintor) the boy beneath 'her' transvestite costume comes – bizarrely – very much to the fore. As the scene develops into a fascinating (yet nightmarish for Amintor) vision of pro-active female resistance (from about line 138 ff.), it is consequently *not* a cross-dressed *character* (such as Aspatia, who will later don male attire as part of the play's *narrative* (in V.iii.)) who presents the play's most profound threat, but the cross-

dressed *boy-actor* who may be seen to emerge from the insubstantial costume of a dominant wife who is, at this moment, revealing her body as her own and claiming it as a site of sexual activity – yet asserting that her will and authority are such that she will deny this aspect of her self-fashioned identity from her husband.

Within the generic confines of tragedy, of course, the emergence of (what was typically considered to be masculine) sexual agency and the revelation of elements of the boy-actor's male anatomy from their previously passive and opaque female encasement (together with the blocking, frustration and mockery of male desire that goes along with them) can lead to nothing but tragic consequences. This boy actor's body (a sort of concrete and physical incarnation of the masculine agency of *hic mulier*) can therefore be seen to appear from beneath the adornments of female apparel in a moment of sociological (and distinctly *theatrical*) disruption in which a distorted 'playing out' of traditional wedding-night scenarios has possible "implications for the sexual politics of future ages." ⁶⁷ The potential connotations of Evadne's transgressive agency therefore seem, in fact, to be cosmic and the 'performance' of this couple's wedding-night 'script' is almost immediately placed into the hands of celestial 'stage managers.' Amintor quite literally asks for some divine 'direction':

Amintor. Was ever such a wedding-night as this?
 You powers above, if you did ever mean
 Man should be used thus, you have thought a way
 How he may bear himself, and save his honour:
 Instruct me in it, for to my dull eyes
 There is no mean, no moderate course to run [...]

(II.i. 242 - 7)

What I want to assert here is that, in a *metatheatrical* moment of horror (in which a female character defies sociological convention by denying sex to her husband whilst claiming the right to sexual activity *per se*), the artifice of the Evadne actor's *transvestite performance* is deliberately exploited in order to heighten the *masculinised* nature of this character's *actions*. In other words, that the boy-actor's *body* is brought directly into play as a ghostly spectre of Evadne's monstrous 'man-womanish' *behaviour*. Whilst the scene therefore demonstrates the fact that this boy is playing a woman *theatrically*, then, it equally visually demonstrates the female appropriation of masculine modes of *social* 'performance' (the metaphorical fodder behind all of this action). Put plainly: because Evadne is now 'acting' in a way that has been culturally inscribed as male, her stage body is also fleetingly allowed to be seen as masculine.

Despite this scene's meta-theatricality, however, or its apparent reversals of traditional expectations for meek brides (and a seeming 'woman-on-top' gender reversal that has transiently put Evadne in control of both her anatomy and destiny), the play is itself fundamentally *conservative* because, deep down (and underneath its costumes) it can be seen to align this kind of agency uniquely with the *male* body. As we are about to see, Evadne's actions are unacceptable for a woman (in contrast to the scores of men in Renaissance drama who neglect

their wives in order to fulfil their sexual desires with punks) and the scene therefore quickly attempts to deploy some extraordinarily recuperative strategies in order to 'normalise' the inverted gender relations (and stage images) that it by now appears to exhibit.

What is *crucial* to my argument, then, is the fact that it is through a further interplay between *anatomy* and *gendered behaviour* that *The Maid's Tragedy* attempts to do so, because:

(i) An emphatic difference between female *speech acts* and male *actions* is once again articulated (Evadne's solemn oath not to sleep with Amintor is interpreted as weak. Unlike a masculine *action*, her *declaration* "I have sworn before, / And here by all things holy do again, / Never to be acquainted with thy bed" (II.i. 237 – 239) is thought able to be called back as Amintor asserts "Such vows as those never ascend the heaven / A tear or two will wash it quite away" (II.i. 255 – 256));

and

(ii) Amintor uses a conception of gender as a *function of anatomical difference* to inform Evadne of the violent *act* of disfigurement through which he proposes to re-master her (and therefore once again demonstrates the ways in which aggressive masculine deeds are expected to speak louder than feminine words).

Amintor's solution to the problem that is posed by a sexually dominant wife has clear anatomical significance. He asserts:

Amintor. I'll drag thee to my bed, and make thy tongue
Undo this wicked oath, or on thy flesh
I'll print a thousand wounds to let out life [...]
(II.i. 277 – 79)

The outburst is significant on a number of levels. As I have indicated above, it attempts to out-do female *speech acts* with the threat of violent masculine *deeds*; but it also plays on a linguistic interchangeability between 'wounds' and 'wombs' (that I have discussed in chapter two above in relation to Falstaff). Its proposed violence can therefore be read as a warning of Amintor's intention to collapse the (vagina like) gashes that he anticipates making on Evadne's body back into a series of little 'wombs' that will instantly 'let out life'.⁶⁸ The violent mutilation of Evadne's body that Amintor proposes (that is surely *also* symbolic of phallic penetration and the rupture of a hymen that is conspicuously absent on their wedding night) is thus also chronologically telescoped in order to become a metaphor for the processes of gestation that will make Evadne's new (and male authored) 'wombs' instantly produce the 'life' that Amintor *should* be granted as a husband through the provision of children – precisely the events that should follow 'naturally' on from a consummation of their marriage, but is here denied because of Evadne's sexual obstinacy.

What is vital to understand about Amintor's threat to stab Evadne to death, then, is the way in which male-authored violence is understood to have the metaphorical ability to *circumvent* female agency entirely. As a result of Amintor's aggression, Evadne will no longer be able to withhold her means of reproduction. Male aggression is thus presented as having the capacity to re-inscribe female anatomy onto the man-womanish body that has emerged – and to re-fashion

Evadne's *agency* into *submission*. Amintor is thus seen to use the vicious parody of female reproductive biology that he proposes to create (vagina like gashes and 'wounds' which are wombs) in order to force his wife back into the performance of the two principal roles that she should, as a woman, occupy: the sexually available spouse and the fecund mother. Amintor threatens, quite literally, to re-shape Evadne's masculinised *corpus* and, by means of violent corporal disfigurement, to carve his wife's reproductive (sexual) duties back into her anatomy as he aggressively repositions her in her due position of subordinancy.

Staggeringly then, Evadne picks up on Amintor's threat and she too turns to the corporal in her defence:

Evadne. Alas, Amintor, thinkst thou I forbear
To sleep with thee because I have *put on*
A maiden's strictness? Look upon these *cheeks*,
And thou shalt find the hot and rising *blood*
Unapt for such a vow. No, in this *heart*
There dwells as much desire, and as much will
To put that wished act in practice as ever yet
Was known to woman [...]

(II.i. 285 – 292. My Italics)

The four line endings that I have here italicised (with their concomitant degrees of stress) certainly compare what can be *performed* with what is *physiological* (for exactly how does one blush on stage?); but they also significantly take Amintor on a voyeuristic (and metaphorical) journey from the *outside* of Evadne's body to its *inside* (from 'cheeks', through 'rising blood' and finally to her 'heart'). Evadne thus achieves two things:

(i) She responds to Amintor's threat of violent mutilation with a metaphorical dissection of her *own* body (and, just like the illustrative muscle-men of Renaissance anatomies since Vesalius' *Fabrica*, she therefore becomes the willing object of her own auto-evisceration)

and

(ii) She allows Amintor the penetration of her body that he so evidently desires.

Yet what is *magnificent* about Evadne's performance at this moment, is the fact that (precisely *because* she locates herself as *both* the subject *and* the object of this metaphorical dissection) she once again asserts her agency and gains the upper hand in the scene. Pre-empting Amintor's violent penetration of her body with a 'thousand wounds' Evadne stalls Amintor's sadistic act with her own anatomical display and thereby provides herself with enough *time* to tell Amintor the *name* of the man who cuckolds him. Needless to say, it is the final *coup de grâce* that kills off Amintor's proud will and renders him pliable. It emasculates him and turns him into a figure who – from this moment onwards – can only 'seem' to be, or 'perform' the role of husband. When Evadne invokes the name of the King it quite simply halts Amintor in his tracks:

Amintor. 'Tis not the King! [...]
Oh thou hast named a word that wipes away
All thoughts revengeful;

In that Sacred name
 'The King' there lies a terror. What frail man
 Dares lift his hand against it [...]

(II.i. 305 - 310)

Stalling his proposed anatomical aggression, Evadne's invocation of regal authority dissipates all of Amintor's phallic energy; his hand, his weapon (and, it would seem, even his penis) now shrink back – and he succumbs to the mere 'playing out' of the lavender marriage that Evadne and her lover have always required of him. In a last *coup de théâtre*, then, Amintor and Evadne find a way out of this tragic wedding-night scene as they decide on a fiction that must be 'practised' (or rehearsed) before it is 'performed' to the court. The pair who have just acted out their outlandish wedding night before the Blackfriars audience now agree to 'stage' a wedding morning for their noble peers:

Amintor. Upon thy chamber floor
 I'll rest tonight, that morning visitors
 May think we did as married people use:
 And prithee, smile upon me when they come,
 And seem to toy, as if thou hadst been pleased
 With what we did

Evadne. Fear not, I will do this

Amintor. Come, let us practise, and as wantonly
 As ever loving bride and bridegroom met
 Let's laugh and enter here [...]

(II.i. 351 - 359)

This victory of Evadne over her husband in the closing moments of Act II is undoubtedly a pivotal point in the play. It constitutes what I consider to be one of two definitive moments in which the virile and martial constructions of masculinity that the first two acts of *The Maid's Tragedy* have striven so hard to set up are punctured, deflated and revealed to be crafted artifice. Amintor's final acceptance of his 'true' role (that of a cuckold) and his subsequent 'performance' of a marriage with Evadne is thus particularly significant because it sets up a paradigm that foreshadows the collapse of *all* the other representations of masculinity that the play has thus far sought to put forward.

From this point onwards, there appears to be a deep suspicion that behind the projected contentment of *any* male exterior there lies an interior truth of cuckoldry, effeminisation and shame. Soon after this scene, Amintor is accordingly made to observe (in an aside that is addressed directly to his audience):

Amintor. [Aside] Men's eyes are not so subtle as to perceive
 My inward misery: I bear my grief
 Hid from the world. How art thou wretched, then?
 For aught I know, all husbands are like me,
 And every one I talk with of his wife
 Is but a well dissembler of his woes,
 As I am [...]

(III. ii. 48 - 52)

The lines highlight Amintor's own sexual anxiety (he is one particular *example* of a knowingly cuckolded husband) but they also have much *wider* implications – they seem to affect all of his male auditors (who must surely not have been insensible to Amintor's subtle transposition of 'My inward misery' into the wider apprehension that is engendered by 'how art *thou* wretched then?'). What is outstanding about Amintor's speech here, then, is the fact that – because it is an aside – it is an articulation of suspicion and anxiety that an actor can do little with other than address explicitly towards his spectators – thus implicating *all* of the men present in the Blackfriars' auditorium in the catastrophic collapse of masculinity that is occurring on stage.

V

Even Melantius, whose martial *puissance* audiences have witnessed set up as the epitome of virile manhood in acts I and II, is therefore subsequently portrayed as an effeminised fraud by the time the play gets to its third act. By act IV, the man who has been depicted as the noblest warrior in Rhodes has accordingly become a phantom projection of his former masculinity – a creature who is seen clinging to his sword as the hollow avatar of his once sturdy virility. As Calianax observes, Melantius' weapon is, by the concluding acts of this tragedy, the only thing that separates him from impotence and old age:

Calianax. Why should you trust a sturdy fellow there,
That has no virtue in him, all's in his sword,
Before me? Do but take his weapons from him
And he's an ass [...]

(IV.ii. 212 - 15)

Just like Amintor, then, Melantius seems to be rendered impotent by events, his manhood is likewise taken away by the revelation that it is the King who has whored his sister. As he threatens Evadne in act IV scene I (and tries to prompt her into becoming his surrogate in murdering the King), Melantius therefore makes explicit reference to the sense of effeminisation that he feels taking hold of him (even as he reaches for the sole phallic prostheses that props up his masculinity):

Melantius. Forsake me then, *all weakness of nature*
That makes men women!

[Draws his sword and forces [Evadne] to the ground]

Speak, you whore, speak truth,
Or, by the dear soul of thy sleeping father,
This sword shall be thy lover; tell, or I'll kill thee.

(IV.i. 93 – 97 *my italics*)

It is Melantius' deep rooted fear of effeminisation that – as well as prompting him to threaten his sister with the sword that he presumes is his only means of reasserting masculine authority over the whorish female body ('this sword shall be thy lover') – also leads to his need to call upon the

authority of his *father* for the patriarchal support that I have alluded to above in his attempts to solicit Evadne to act out a regicide on his behalf.

The phallic intentions behind Melantius' use of his sword are omnipresent throughout this scene. Revealed or sheathed, this phallic foil is intended to be the instrument that achieves (via Evadne) the reconstitution of Melantius' wounded masculine pride. This soldier (like Amintor) therefore also attempts to inform his sister of his intention to inscribe aggressive masculine authority into her body:

Melantius. Do not fall back again;
My sword's unsheathed yet [...]

(IV.i. 117 -118)

In a sad indictment of his impotence, however, act iv scene i only serves to demonstrate the ways in which Melantius' puffed up articulations of phallic aggression (like those with which the play started) are now seen as hollow – they are entirely limited to a pathetic bullying of his younger sister, rather than an attack on the actual perpetrator of the play's wrongs. Whilst the murder of the King that Amintor proposes to enact is brimful of homo-social bonding and phallocentric violence:

Enter Amintor [with his sword drawn]

Amintor. Out with thy sword, and hand in hand with me
Rush to the chamber of this hated King,
And sink him with the weight of all his sins
To hell forever [...]

(IV.ii. 296 - 99)

Melantius' subsequent invocation of regal power and authority instantly effeminises both himself and his friend. It renders both men incapable of any virile aggressive action:

Melantius. [...] I dare as much as valour,
But 'tis the King, the King, the King, Amintor,
With whom thou fightest [...]

Amintor *[letting fall his sword]* I cannot tell
What thou has said, but thou hast charmed my sword
Out of my hand, and left me shaking here
Defenceless [...]

(IV.ii. 310 – 16)

The basic metaphor for what appears to be happening to these men could not be more obvious. It is one of short-lived arousal and a desire to act (the vengeful desire to kill a King); yet it is almost immediately followed by an invocation of impotence and detumescence that is visually depicted through the raising – and immediate falling – of these warriors' swords. Neither Amintor nor Melantius can manage to keep their blades 'up' when faced with the power and authority of a King; an effeminising dew has rusted them and, whilst the idealised male attack that they desire is constructed as an aggressive (and sexualised) action, they are rendered incapable of actually *performing* it. They cannot 'act out' their masculine revenge.

Interestingly then, Melantius brings Evadne's rapacious and whoreish female sexual appetite back into play as he attempts to convince her of a woman's ability to kill a King:

Melantius. Y'are valiant in his bed, and bold enough
To be a stake whore, and have your maiden's name
Discourse for grooms and pages; and hereafter,
When his cool majesty hath laid you by.
To be at pension with some need sir
For meat and coarser clothes:
Thus far you knew no fear.
Come, you shall kill him [...]

(IV.I. 147 – 53)

The whole early part of the scene – in which Melantius persuades Evadne to murder her lover – therefore turns (once again) around masculine constructions of the sexualised female body. Evadne is metaphorically packed to the gills with rapacious lust, in fact:

[her] body is too little for the story,
The lusts of which would fill another woman,
Though she had twins within her [...]

(IV.I. 30 - 32)

Yet despite her swelling lust and passion, the killing of the King that is proposed to Evadne by Melantius is a very *feminine* form of violence. In order to avoid the complete usurpation of masculinity that will actually take place in this play, Melantius envisions Evadne's regicide as the same (feminised) form of murder that Shakespeare reserved for his emasculated Othello (who, in the same way that Amintor did not take the maidenhead of his bride on his wedding night, is accordingly made to kill Desdemona without spilling a single drop of her blood). Melantius therefore advises his sister:

Melantius. And t'were to kiss him dead, thou'dst smother him.
Be wise and kill him [...]

(IV.I. 155 - 56)

As we are about to see, however, the form of murder that Evadne actually performs in the final act of *The Maid's Tragedy* is an entirely different form of execution and – as was the case in the lead up to her wedding-night with Amintor – the induction to Evadne's regicide (V.I. 1 - 10) consequently appears to contain an overt sexualisation of this female figure that is intended up of the rest of the scene not as a gentle smothering, but as one that will culminate in a sexually explicit act.

VI

The first ten lines of act V scene I (the regicide scene) come in the form a bawdy exchange between Evadne and an unnamed 'Gentleman' (the character who provides her with the key to

the King's chamber). Its lewd references once more encourage Evadne's audience to speculate upon her as a performer of sundry sexual acts – with both the King and with this stranger:

Enter Evadne and a Gentleman

Evadne. Sir, is the King abed?

Gentleman. Madam, an hour ago.

Evadne. Give me the key then, and let none be near;
'Tis the King's pleasure.

Gentleman. I understand you madam: would 'twere mine!
I must not wish good rest unto your ladyship.

Evadne. You talk, you talk.

Gentleman. 'Tis all I dare do, madam, but the King
Will wake, and then –

Evadne. Saving your imagination, pray, good night, sir.

Gentleman. A good night be it, then, and a long one, madam [...]
(V.I. 1 – 10)

Despite her attempt at a rebuff here, Evadne seems for some reason to be extraordinarily flirtatious with her choice of put-down for this mysterious 'Gentleman'. The line: 'You talk, you talk' (that constitutes, once again, a remark that attempts to effeminise a man because it renders him impotent: he is accused of 'talking' rather than 'acting') also inexorably contains an implicit challenge to this Gentleman to *prove* that he is capable of *more* than just talking – and hence constitutes a subtle invitation for him to have sex with Evadne. The introduction to V.I. is, as a result – and despite being a brief dalliance – highly significant because of its devious sexualisation of Evadne and also because it functions as a reiteration of the male versus female dichotomy (of action versus speech) that runs throughout the play. The sexual motif with which act v starts will thus subsequently be used to underscore the rapacious 'masculinity' of Evadne (or at least of her *actions*) once she gets into the King's chamber because, once alone with the King, it is made manifestly clear that Evadne's primary objective is not a feminised smothering, nor verbal intercourse, but resolute and aggressive masculine *action*.

After a brief warning to other women against disloyalty (that is once again manifestly corporal),

Evadne. Let no woman dare
From this hour be disloyal, if her heart
Be flesh, if she have blood and can fear [...]
(V.I. 16 – 18)

Evadne moves to her lover's bedside and (in an emulation of another well-known – and male – avenger), before the sleeping King, she avows:

Evad [...] I must kill him
 And I will do it bravely: the mere joy
 Tells me I merit in it. Yet I must not
 Thus tamely do it while he sleeps: that were
 To rock him to another world; my vengeance
 Shall take him waking, and then lay before him
 The number of his wrongs and punishments.
 I'll shape his sins like furies till I waken
 His evil angel, his sick conscience,
 And then I'll strike him dead.

Hamlet. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
 And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;
 And so am I revenged [...]
 [...] am I then revenged,
 To take him in the purging of his soul,
 When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
 Up, sword; and know thou a more horrid hent:
 When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
 Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed;
 At gaming, swearing, or about some act
 That has no relish of salvation in't;
 Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven

(V.i. 26 – 35)

Hamlet (III.iii. 73 - 93)

The speech (together with its obvious play on the revenge tradition) makes it conspicuously clear to Evadne's audience that she is assuming what should, under normal circumstances, be a masculine role – that she is acting as surrogate for the effeminised pair who are incapable of performing this deed for themselves. Despite witnessing such a break with tradition, however (one that introduces a female revenger into the play), no audience could conceivably be prepared for what happens next, as, in one of the most outlandish and eroticised assassinations to take place Renaissance drama, a sleeping King (who is therefore in a weak and subdued position) is tied by both arms to his bed by his lover (S.D after V.i. 35) and brutally stabbed to death (V.i. 100 – 113). What makes the regicide of V.i. particularly significant, however, is – once again – not simply the *fact* that Evadne kills the King her lover – for such events take place in several other plays – but the highly sexualised way in which she does so. My interest in this scene is therefore in the *manner* in which Evadne's regicide plays upon the anatomical differences that separate her from her male counterpart – and its function as a sex act.

In order for the King actor to remain visible (and audible) to the majority of his audience for the remainder of this scene (because spectators would have been located on at least three sides of the Blackfriars' thrust stage and possibly, also, in boxes above it – as well as on stools on the stage itself), we may legitimately presume that the King actor must have been sleeping prone on his back at the scene's top (and that he is therefore trussed-up on his back by Evadne, with or without a pillow, facing upwards on his bed). As he awakes, then, the King finds himself lashed in the most vulnerable position conceivable. Bizarrely, however, he willingly submits to his bondage with erotic glee and supposes it all to be part of some new kind of sex-game that Evadne has dreamed up for him:

King. What pretty new device is this, Evadne?
 What, do you tie me to you? By my love,
 This is a quaint one. Come, my dear, and kiss me
 I'll be thy Mars; to bed, my Queen of Love,
 Let us be caught together, that the gods may see
 And envy our embraces. (V.i. 47 – 52)

As I have indicated above, the induction with the unnamed Gentleman has already set this scene up as one that is expected to lead towards some kind of sexual fruition – and the King's reaction to being bound certainly seems to indicate that he has 'risen' to the occasion. Evadne observes:

Stay, sir, stay:
You are too hot, and I have brought you physic
To temper your high veins [...]

(V.i. 52 – 54)

The term 'veins' was frequently used in Renaissance English to allude to the male genitals (Thomas Heywood, for example, toyed with the term in the sense of 'an erection' when he referred, in *The Rape of Lucrece*, to "choice cates That straight dissolve to puritie of blood, That keepe the veines full, and enflame the appetite." In Middleton's *A Mad World my Masters* a succubus also uses the word to signify the erect male member as she sings: "Seize me, then, with veins most cheerful; Women love no flesh that's fearful").⁶⁹ We may therefore legitimately presume that the King is, at this point (and in a metaphorical sense at least), 'ready' for penetrative sex with Evadne. What the unfortunate sovereign does not realise, however, is that – although he presumes that the cooling of his passion will follow a normal, sexual, route and therefore commands:

King. Prithee to bed then; let me take it warm;
Here thou shalt know the state of my body better [...]

(V.i. 55 – 56)

Evadne has a much more *enduring* vision of the detumescence that she plans for him – and has come to his chamber with the intention of putting a *permanent* end to his destructive sexual desires. In exactly the same way that the language and staging of Evadne's wedding-night scene with Amintor metamorphosed, so the whole metaphorical landscape of V.i. now begins to transform into an extended metaphor of anatomical inversion as Evadne proceeds to explain her intentions to the King.

According to early modern physiology, there were two ways to 'cool' the veins. The first was coitus and the second phlebotomy. The King is therefore informed that, rather than experiencing the sexual gratification that he expects to coincide with ejaculation and detumescence, he must instead 'bleed' in order to be purged:

Evadne. I know you have a surfeited foul body,
And you must bleed.

King. Bleed!

Evadne. Ay, you shall bleed. Lie still, and if the devil
Your lust will give you leave, repent [...]

[Draws a knife]

Evadne plans no straightforward blood-letting, however, and, in a re-enactment of (and a punishment for) her own defloration, she intends to turn the King's metaphorically prominent phallus (or 'veins') into her maidenhead, or hymen (which, because there were two configurations of the term in Renaissance English, was another sort of 'vein' – as is testified by the satirical *Epitaph on a Maiden-head* that laments "Does any ask me how I lost my Breath? I broke a fatal

vein, and bled to death").⁷⁰ Evadne's 'bleeding' of the King is consequently both a purgation of the King's excessive heat and sexual appetite *and* a dramatic re-enactment of the moment in which he ruined her reputation by taking her virginity. Her regicide is therefore an action that is intended both to castrate her lover and to effeminise him. In it, the King's penis is to be replaced with Evadne's hymen so that she may repay the wrong he has done her.

Yet Evadne's bleeding of the King is – in anatomical terms – even *more* than this. According to the residual theories of medieval physiology, inordinate sexual appetite was dependent on a superfluity of blood (and hence the regular expulsion of excessive blood from the 'chaste' female body by means of menstruation and the – much more occasional – cleansing of the male body by means of nosebleeds).⁷¹ Hence, as well as constituting a sexualised gender reversal that re-enacts Evadne's loss of maidenhood, the 'bleeding' of the King that Evadne proposes may *also* be seen to revolve around notions of purgation that can be directly linked to early modern understandings of the function of menstruation. The blood that Evadne intends to draw from her lover will thus temper his 'surfeited foul body' (or, as the *OED* glosses these words, restore balance to a body that is "filled to excess, charged, oppressed or disordered with defiling or noxious matter").⁷² Moreover, in the Renaissance, the word 'purgation' itself (the clearing away of impurities and excesses) was the very term used for menstruation. The King is therefore further effeminised by having his lust relieved in just the same way that menstruation was believed to relieve excessive passions from the female body.⁷³ What is more, as Evadne performs this double-edged effeminisation (tempering the King's 'vein' or 'veins' and purging him) she assumes a phallic dagger to perform the bloodletting. Since Evadne also mounts on top of her one-time sexual partner in order to do so (and because the King is at this moment tied in a posture closely approximating the customary female place in the missionary position), when she kills the King, Evadne enacts a complex range of metaphorical activities that involve her taking back a metaphorical maidenhead, causing the King to 'bleed' in a purgation that is evocative of menstruation, and acting out a reversal of standard penetrative heterosexual sex.

Just as in act II scene I, then, the blatant gender reversal of this scene is also made abundantly clear when, in addition (and in preparation for the extraordinary act of phallic aggression that Evadne undertakes as Amintor and Melantius' surrogate), she even goes as far as to eschew the name of woman, and genders herself as a vicious, yet significantly, *male* animal:

King. How's this, Evadne?

Evadne. I am not she, nor bear I in this breast
So much cold spirit to be called a woman:
I am a tiger [...]

(V.i. 64 – 67)

As Cotgrave's 1611 dictionary testifies (together with the use of the word 'tigress' in various Renaissance plays), Evadne could just as well have assumed a feminine version of this mythically heartless and ruthless killer and *still* achieved the effect of distancing herself from pity

and trepidation.⁷⁴ The fact that she does *not* choose to do so is, I would argue, further evidence of the deliberate gender reversals that Beaumont and Fletcher are seeking to enact in this second pivotal scene.

The King soon sees what is going on and attempts to reason with Evadne; he tries to instil in her a respect for her 'naturally' gendered position as a woman:

King. I prithee, speak not these things; thou art gentle,
And wert not meant thus rugged (V.I. 83 – 84)

but, since Evadne has taken pains to bind him in order to make sure that all the that the King *can* do is 'speak' ("Stir nothing but your tongue" (V.I. 86)), he is powerless to stop her; he cannot 'act' in response – and Evadne thus repeatedly inscribes her vengeance on his helpless, feminised, body:

"Thus, thus, thou foul man, Thus I begin my vengeance [99 – 100] [...] I do not mean, sir / To part so fairly with you; we must change / More of these love tricks yet [102 – 104] [...] Thou, thou monster! [105] [...] This for my Lord Amintor, This for my noble brother, and this stroke / For the most wrong'd of women!" [109 – 112]

As it builds in its intensity and Evadne repeatedly plunges her dagger into the body of her lover (and my incarnation as a director tells me that at least *ten* stabbings could easily be accommodated within the stresses of the above truncated speech) the scene becomes both increasingly transgressive and sexually climactic. The King gives out a series of eroticised gasps that culminate in an "O!" (V.I. 106) and then, as he finally transpires, the pair both 'die' together:

King. "O, I die."

Evadne. Die all our faults together! I forgive thee. (V.I. 111- 112)

Their joint articulation of the word for orgasm overlaps in the last few seconds of stage time before Evadne quickly steals away and the 'gentlemen' who arrive proceed to further augment the need for this woman to have transformed into a man in order to have committed such a deed:

1 Gent. This will be laid on us: *who can believe*
A woman could do this? (V.I. 128 – 29 my italics)

VII

Having created this monstrous version of the avenger, of course, the play now finds itself in a difficult position. If it is to go on to attempt 'normalise' its sexual relations (and to reassert any

notion of patriarchal control) a figure such as Evadne *cannot* continue to exist. *The Maid's Tragedy* has thus far revealed the indolence and effeminacy of its principal male characters – and has set up a nightmarish vision of pro-active female agency that has challenged the very taxonomies of gender upon which patriarchal society was based: in order to kill a King whose excessive lust was the root of all the problems of Rhodes, a woman has been turned into his bloody (and distinctly masculinised) nemesis. As a result, in the two closing scenes that follow Evadne's regicide, the play's men can be seen to take over the reigns of authority as they swiftly begin to clear the stage of the troublesome women who have begun to occupy it.

Compared to the subtlety and sheer dramatic beauty of the two major scenes involving Evadne that I have analysed above, however, the rapid re-inscription of patriarchal control that Beaumont and Fletcher attempt to undertake as the play concludes appears both brute and maladroit. Lysippus first declares himself King (thus reaffirming the power and authority of a patrilinear male monarchy), then Melantius and Diphilus immediately step into the breach in order to acknowledge their part as 'authors' of this murder; significantly, they do so in a scene that takes place in the martial setting of the fortress walls that surround Rhodes. Both these scenes are short, but – as with the opening moments of the play – they are uniquely masculine events in which the play's men rally round, assume responsibility for, and follow on from female actions.

Ultimately, in the last moments of the play, an extraordinary killing-off of the play's two principal female characters is undertaken as part of *The Maid's Tragedy's* somewhat hurried re-assertion of fragile masculine authority. In a strange foreshadowing of the recuperative strategies that will later be used in the conclusion to the *Haec Vir* pamphlet, the men of the play suddenly seem to assert:

Inough [...] I will no more be *Hæc Vir*, but *Hic Vir*, nor you *Hic Mulier* but *Hæc Mulier*.
from henceforth deformitie shall packe to Hell; and if at any time hee hide himselfe upon
the earth, yet it shall bee with contempt and disgrace [...]⁷⁵

The Maid's Tragedy's consequently concludes with a re-inscription of traditional gender hierarchies that is undertaken both verbally and visually – and this is where I come back to the frontispiece scene with which my analysis of this play began.

As Aspatia enters in man's apparel, she starts the play's final scene off by letting her audience know that things are about to end tragically for her ("This is my fatal hour" (V.iii. 1)). *Despite* her assumption of masculine attire, however, Aspatia's tragedy is deliberately constructed as a function of her *female* anatomy – because she pleads for "Heaven [to] forgive / My rash attempt, that causelessly hath laid / Grievs on me that will never let me rest / And put a woman's heart into my breast" (V.i. 2 – 4). Having set up a direct tension between the external signifiers of Aspatia's masculine apparel and the internal 'truth' of her feminine body, then, there subsequently follows a kind of *hic mulier / hæc vir* exchange in which a servant of Amintor takes

Enter Servant

Servant. And you *sir*, what's your business?

There is a vile dishonest trick in man,
More than in women. All the men I meet
Appear thus to me, are harsh and rude,
And have subtlety in everything,
Which love could ever know; but we fond women
Harbour the easiest and the smoothest faults,
And think all shall go so. It is unjust
That men and women should be matched together [...]

That hand of thine in honour that I bear
Unto the wronged Aspatia [...]

Thou canst not fight: the blows thou makst at me
Are quite besides, and those I offer at thee
Thou spreadst thine arms and takst upon thy breast,
Alas defenceless.

As Aspatia proffers herself, is willingly penetrated, and falls 'dying' once more as a virgin-sacrifice before her true-love's feet, the real object of the play's new-found desire to normalise its gender relations suddenly enters.

The figure who abruptly bursts onto the stage forms a stark contrast to the archetypally submissive Aspatia. We read:

Enter Evadne, her hande bloody with a knife.

In a turn of events that is reminiscent of the wedding-night scene, as soon as the acquiescent Aspatia has fallen to her 'grave', the play's most macabre spectre of man-womanishness rushes in brandishing the self-same phallic weapon with which she has only just penetrated her lover. Evadne immediately attempts to assert before Amintor that her aggression (and therefore her virile and bloodied persona) should be more beautiful and desirable than her femininity was before:

Evadne. Noble Amintor, put off thy amaze;
Let thine eyes loose, and speak. Am I not fair?
Looks not Evadne beauteous with these rites now [...]
(V.iii. 115 – 117)

Yet the vision that this mannish-woman presents is repulsive to Amintor. On stage he faces a simple choice between a submissive, penetrated wife and a dominant, terrifying penetrator: his decision appears to be simple – and Evadne is therefore almost immediately forced to commit suicide as a result of his instant and uncompromising rejection. Before this happens, however, she is defined (and with her perhaps all masculine women) as a viper who is ready to strike at the unsuspecting breast of man: Amintor therefore warns his audience that "Those have most power to hurt us that we love; / We lay our sleeping lives within their arms" (V.iii. 127 – 8).

Rather than being allowed to assume the role of the noble avenger, then, Evadne's transgressive gender reversal is used in order to bring about her final depiction as a character who brings with her the spectre of monstrous and satanic otherness. Just as we saw in the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet (with its talk of "rude Scithian[s ...] untamed Moore[s ...] naked Indian[s and ...] Wilde Irish Lords"), Evadne's agency is also linked to the monstrous nature of a transgressively dominant racial other as Amintor reveals "all thy life is a continued ill. / *Black* is thy colour now, disease thy nature" (V.iii. 132 - 33).⁷⁶ Amintor then describes Evadne's action as the crowning moment of all the ill-deeds of the play. It is an action that so inverts the 'natural' order of things that it turns day into night. It even has the power to transform the play's topographical landscape into a decidedly desolate vista:

to augment my woe
You are now present, stained with a King's blood
Violently shed. This keeps night here,
And throws an unknown wilderness about me [...]
(V.iii. 145 – 48)

Amintor sees Evadne as a "*Monster of cruelty*" (V.iii. 156. My italics) and fears contamination by her siren-like callings to him ("I dare not stay; / There is no end of woman's reasoning" (V.iii. 165 – 66)).

He therefore turns his back on her and, as he exits, she stabs herself – leaving the play's two principal women bleeding to death centre stage.

When Amintor returns, after a brief homily on the wrong that he has done to Aspatia, he is finally reconciled to his troth-plight wife (an action that only takes place after she has been seen to re-assume her female persona). But it is too late for Aspatia, and she dies. As Amintor immediately attempts to follow the woman whom he now realises to have been the perfect and submissive wife he too strikes the blow with which he intends to end his life. Rather than allowing an idealised marriage-in-death for this pair, however, the remaining *corpus* of the play's male characters are hurriedly brought on stage – and Melantius summarily inserts himself between these heterosexual lovers.

As he mourns his dying friend, Melantius calls his own anatomy into play once more ("Eyes, call up your tears: / this is Amintor ! Heart, he was my friend: / Melt! Now it flows" (V.iii.251 –53)). As Melantius' friend dies, then, he is not cradled in his wife Aspatia's but in his mentor Melantius' arms. With Aspatia pushed aside in favour of a homoerotic bonding between the play's two principal men, Diphilus attempts to rekindle some interest in its other principal female character and mourns the passing of his sister ("O brother, / Here lies your sister slain! / You lose yourself in sorrow there (V.iii. 262 – 63)) – but any sense of remorse for either of the females on stage is immediately undermined by Melantius' emphatic assertion:

Why Diphilus, it is
A thing to laugh at in respect of this [Amintor's dead body]:
Here was my sister, father, brother, son,
All that I had [...]

(V.iii. 264 – 66)

Just as it began with an attempt to efface femininity entirely, so *The Maid's Tragedy* concludes. Melantius attempts one final act that is intended to put an end to what he now acknowledges as effeminised talking: "I am prattler; but no more [*offers to stab himself*] (V.iii. 276 and SD)); yet the play does not allow its warrior to commit suicide in this martial way. Diphilus and Strato restrain Melantius and he resolves instead to starve himself to death:

His spirit is but poor that can be kept
From death by want of weapons [...]
I vow, Amintor, I will never eat,
Or drink, or sleep, or have to do with that
That may preserve life: this I swear to keep.

(V.iii. 284 – 90)

In a rather crass conclusion (that is unfortunately typical of so many end of act five rhyming couplets), Lysippus, the new ruler, simply looks on all these events as an object lesson to Kings to be chaste:

May this a fair example be to me
To rule with temper, for on lustful kings
Unlooked-for sudden deaths from God are sent;

But cursed is he that is their instrument.

(V.iii. 292 – 95)

On the surface, then, *The Maid's Tragedy* has come full circle. Discretely gendered 'normality' has been restored to Rhodes and the disquieting figures of a cross-dressed woman and a masculinised female avenger have been dispensed with in order to accommodate the strong homo-social (and homoerotic) bonding of two male characters who are soon to be united in death.

Significantly, however, this play has also raised some rather frightening spectres of female authority and agency as it has run its course – and has given a substantial amount of stage time to a female character who has asserted herself above a principal defining figure of patriarchal authority. *The Maid's Tragedy* is, therefore, a fascinating first step in both the dramatic representation of female agency and in the processes of recuperation that were undertaken by a patriarchal social system that felt itself to be threatened by the emergence of autonomous and independent female bodies.

Following on from *The Maid's Tragedy's* dispatch of its two central female characters, the sexualised murder of histrionic delineations of the female body was, I believe, further exploited in the tragedies of John Ford (and this time as a function of the processes of experimental anatomy). It is to this phenomenon that I will turn in chapter six of this dissertation – as I argue the murder of female characters in Fordian tragedy to have developed as a result of the treatment of the female body in anatomy theatres (and on one particular London stage that, as a result of architectural accident, resembled them). But before I move on to a discussion of what I will term 'dissective murder' in Fordian tragedy; I first need to look at the architectural environment in which the actual eviscerations of early modern Europe took place – and to the dissective processes of the anatomy hall itself. It is therefore to *theatrum anatomicum*, to their architecture and to the dissective performances that were enacted within them that I will turn my attention in the next chapter.

Notes to Chapter IV:

¹ Catherine Belsey, 'Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies', in *Alternative Shakespeares*, edited by John Drakakis (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 167

² Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference*, p. 180.

³ Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference*, p. 188.

⁴ Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference*, p. 167.

⁵ John Chamberlain, *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, edited by Norman Egbert McClure (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939), Vol. II., p. 289 (a letter of 12th February, 1620). My Italics.

⁶ Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference*, p. 190.

⁷ See Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), pp. 1 – 5; and Belsey, *Disrupting Sexual Difference*, p. 175.

⁸ Kathleen McLuskie, 'The Patriarchal Bard: Feminist Criticism and Shakespeare: *King Lear* and *Measure for Measure*', in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, edited by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield second edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 92.

⁹ Anon, *Haec Vir: or the Womanish Man: Being an Answer to a late Booke intituled Hic Mulier* (London: John Trundle, 1620), sig. A3^r/A3^v.

¹⁰ Anon, *Hæc Vir*, sig. C3^v- C4^r.

¹¹ Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 106.

¹² Howard, *Stage and Social*, p. 106.

¹³ Howard, *Stage and Social*, p. 121.

¹⁴ There is a degree of conflation that goes on in the accounts of what are (possibly) the three women who generally get intertwined and subsumed into a single character. As Simon Shepherd has noted:

The earliest printed pamphlet life of her appeared in 1582 [and t]he story seems to have been a popular one in that it enjoyed several reprintings between 1590 and 1635. There was a ballad entered in the Stationer's Register on 27 August 1590; and a play, now lost, performed by the Admiral's Men on 14 February 1594/5

Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth Century Drama* (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1981), p. 70. As will be seen later in this chapter, Middleton and Dekker's *Roaring Girl* variously refers to the same character as 'Mary', 'Moll', 'Moll Cutpurse' and 'Long Meg'.

¹⁵ Anon, *The Life and Death of Mistress Mary Frith, Alias Moll Cutpurse* (London, 1662), start of section II, p. 33.

¹⁶ Anon, *Life and Death*, p. 37

¹⁷ See footnote 33 to Chapter III.

¹⁸ Anon, *Life and Death*, p. 46

¹⁹ Consistory of London Correction Book (fols. 19-20). Cited as Appendix E to *The Roaring Girl*, edited by Paul Mulholland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 263. The record is also mentioned in Stephen Orgel, 'The Subtexts of *The Roaring Girl*', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, edited by Susan Zimmerman (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 12.

²⁰ Anon, *Life and Death*, p. 49.

²¹ Anon, *Life and Death*, p. 46.

²² For a discussion of the authorship of *The Roaring Girl*, see Mulholland's Introduction in the Revels edition.

²³ There have, of course, been recent readings of Dekker that have sought to problematise this notion, especially Kathleen McLuskie's reading of Simon Eyre's bounty in relation to the social tensions of the Prentice Boy Riots. See Kathleen McLuskie, 'Prentices, Citizens and The London Audience', in *Dekker and Heywood* (London and New York: St. Martin's, 1994), pp. 54 - 81.

²⁴ Thomas Dekker, *Dekker his Dreame* (London, 1620), Title page.

²⁵ Dekker, *Dekker his Dreame*, sig. A4^r.

²⁶ Dekker, *Dekker his Dreame*, p. 29 - 30.

²⁷ Mary Beth Rose, 'Women in Men's Clothing: Apparel and Social Stability in *The Roaring Girl*', *English Literary Renaissance*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn 1984), p. 367.

²⁸ This and all subsequent references to the play are to the Revels edition, edited by Paul Mulholland, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

²⁹ Alison Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama* (Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999), p. 87.

³⁰ I think here that a good deal of the authority that Moll's feminist incarnation purports to possess is successfully undermined by the ways in which she taps into the more traditional and recuperative modalities of 'comic-inversion.'

The ways in which transgressive inversions have been successfully used to destabilise or critique dominant classes, genders or ideologies (and particularly the sort of sexual inversions that Moll undertakes by means of her sometimes grotesquely delineated anatomy) have, of course, been eruditely articulated by Michael Bakhtin and his followers (with the Bakhtinian school of thought stressing the fact that characters who invert inevitably emerge as moral victors. See Michael Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, translated by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), Introduction and especially pp. 1 - 58).

There is, however, a flip side to this argument: a discourse that stresses the *conservative* and *recuperative* nature of transgressive comic inversion (especially within literary genres); and this is the use of comic-inversion that I am attempting to posit here in relation to Moll (in my argument that her grotesque parody of womanhood allows for heterosexual and patriarchal systems to be shored up through the marriage between Sebastian and Mary Fitzallard that she facilitates).

The best articulations of this *recuperative* 'spin' on comic-inversion have, to my knowledge, been made in relation to Greek and Roman comedy, rather than that of the early modern period (see, for example, A.T. Edwards, 'Historicizing the Popular Grotesque: 'Rabelais' and Attic Old Comedy', in *Theater and Society in the Classical World*, edited by R. Scodel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993); or Jeffrey Henderson, 'The Demos and the Comic Competition', in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context* edited by John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990).

In relation to early modern literature, Jonathan Dollimore has produced an interesting contribution to the debate and has observed, in relation to the concept of deviancy:

[W]e are mistaken if we think that deviancy exists outside of the dominant order. Though socially marginal the deviant remains discursively central: though an outcast of society s/he remains indispensable to it. For example: the process of identifying and demonising deviance may be "necessary" to maintaining social order, either in the sense that deviancy poses an actual threat, or that it is perceived as threatening, or that a prevailing authority is able to relegitimate itself through that process of identifying and demonising deviance [...]

Jonathan Dollimore, 'Subjectivity, Sexuality and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection', *Renaissance Drama* (New Series), XIII (1982), p. 60.

³¹ Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective*, p.120.

³² Jean Howard, 'Sex and Social Conflict: The Erotics of *The Roaring Girl*', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, edited by Susan Zimmerman (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 177.

³³ Howard, *Sex and Social Conflict*, p. 178.

³⁴ Howard, *Sex and Social Conflict*, p. 179.

³⁵ See Howard, *Sex and Social Conflict*, pp. 179 – 187 (especially pp. 184 – 185).

³⁶ Gustav Ungerer, 'The Viol da Gamba as a Sexual Metaphor in Elizabethan Music and Literature', *Renaissance and Reformation* (New Series) Vol. VIII. Number 2 (1984), pp. 79 – 90.

³⁷ Christopher Simpson, *The Division-Viol, or, The Art of Playing Ex tempore upon a ground. Divided Into Three Parts* (London, 1667), p. 2 (Quoted in Ungerer, *Op. Cit.* p. 80.)

³⁸ Simpson, *The Division-Viol*, p. 7 (Quoted in Ungerer, *Op. Cit.* p. 80.)

³⁹ The translation of this sonnet is my own. It was first published in 1572 (in a corrected edition of Jean Louveau's French translations of Giovan Francesco Straparola's riddles *Le piacevoli notti*). Larivey's edition (that first rendered Straparola's riddles into sonnets) was enormously popular and went through eleven volumes between 1572 and 1615. It is here reproduced from *Les Facetieuses Nuits de Straparole traduites par Jean Louveau et Pierre de Larivey*, edited by P. Jannet (Paris, 1857) Vol. II, p. 325. (Quoted in Ungerer, *Viol da Gamba*, p. 81).

In Straparola and Louveau, both the subject and the object of the poem appear to be male (giving 'his thighs' and so on). Larivey consequently transposes the sexual orientation of the poem towards a heterosexual mode, yet still retains the essence of phallic penetration.

⁴⁰ See Pierre Guiraud, *Dictionnaire historique, stylistique, rhétorique, étymologique de la littérature érotique* (Paris, 1978), p. 31.

⁴¹ The metaphor is evident in Pericles' comments to the daughter of Antiochus concerning the incestuous relationship that she has with her father: 'You are a fair viol, and your sense the strings, / Who, fingered to make man his lawful music, / Would draw heaven down and all the gods to hearken; / But, being played upon before your time, / Hell only danceth at so harsh a chime.' (William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, I.i. 82 – 6). It is also employed in the induction to John Marston's *Malcontent*, in which Slinko refuses to sit between William Sly's legs and objects: 'the audience will then take me for a viol da gamba and think that you play upon me.' (*The Malcontent*, induction, lines 19 – 20). The character Saviolina, in Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humour*, also displays an amusing desire to become her own viol, so that she will have the pleasure of being 'played upon' by the gallant (Fastidius Brisk) who woos her (Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of His Humour*, III. ix. 78 ff.). The figure also features in Donne's poem 'A Lady and her Viol', in which the instrument is given a masculine gender by a male lover who is jealous of the attention that the object of his own sexual desires affords her viol. See John Donne, *The Poems of John Donne* edited by E. K. Chambers (London, 1896), vol. II, p. 269.

All of the above examples (and a range of others in French and Italian Literature) are cited in Ungerer, *Op. Cit.* pp. 79 – 90.

⁴² Howard, *Sex and Social Conflict*, p. 175.

⁴³ Howard, *Sex and Social Conflict*, p. 175.

⁴⁴ Howard, *Sex and Social Conflict*, p. 175. The Saint Sebastian idea set out in James M. Saslow, 'The Tenderest Lover: Saint Sebastian in Renaissance Painting: A Proposed Homoerotic Iconology of North Italian Art 1450 – 1550', *Gai Saber* 1, pp. 58 – 66.

⁴⁵ The different modes of representation are complex at this moment and need to be teased out. Although the boy actor playing Mary Fitzallard is at this juncture dressed in clothing that is suited to his real or actual sex, I would argue that – operating as he does as a female character within the conventions of a straightforward romantic disguise plot – he is *not* primarily 'read' by his audience as a boy in this scene. In my own practical experience, the heterosexual valences of this moment certainly come out very strongly in performance (regardless of a transvestite tradition).

Howard's claims about the 'one-sex' model are also further undermined here by the fact that Mary Fitzallard is dressed as a young *pageboy*. As Peter Stallybrass has observed, much recent criticism has somewhat blurred the distinctions between boys' and men's genitals, with the former being "peculiarly distorted [and enlarged] by being thought of as THE phallus." See Peter Stallybrass, 'Transvestism and the Body Beneath: Speculating on the Boy Actor', in Zimmerman (ed.), *Erotic Politics*, p. 68.

Mary Fitzallard certainly lacks the phallic *puissance* that is sometimes erotically attributed to Moll (although Moll is also, in my opinion, an unambiguously female character; with those who consider her as male or hermaphroditical falling into the category of the comically reviled in the play).

⁴⁶ Howard, *Stage and Social Struggle*, p. 108.

⁴⁷ Mary Beth Rose, 'Women in Men's Clothing: Apparel and Social Stability in The Roaring Girl', *English Literary Renaissance*, Vol. 14 No. 3 (Autumn 1984), p. 374.

⁴⁸ John Taylor, *Superbiæ Flagellum, or, The Whip of Pride* (London, 1621), sig. C6^V.

⁴⁹ The precise date for *The Maid's Tragedy* is unknown; as T.W. Craik has observed, however (in the Revels Edition):

"It is agreed that *The Maid's Tragedy* was written in 1610 or 1611; this agreement is based on inference and not on any known facts as to its composition, licensing or first performance. The upper limit of 31 October 1611 can be safely inferred from the name which Sir George Buc (or Buck), Master of the Revels, gave to another play, which he censored and licensed on that day by writing this note on its manuscript: "This second Mayden's Tragedy (for it hath no name inscribed...)".

⁵⁰ Gail Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 31 – 34.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the relationship between visual representations of Renaissance dramatic heroines in print culture and speculations about actual stage practices (or the linguistic construction of femininity within play-texts), see Kathleen McLuskie, 'The Act, the Role, and the Actor: Boy Actresses on the Elizabethan Stage' *New Theatre Quarterly* 3, 10 (1987), pp. 120 – 30. Most of the surviving illustrations are reproduced in R.A. Foakes, *Illustrations of the English Stage 1580 – 1642* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985).

⁵² Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy* (Act I Scene I, lines 19 – 21). This and all further quotations are taken from the Revels Edition, edited by T.W. Craik (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

⁵³ Although Aspatia claims to be her brother when she cross-dresses at the end of the play, he is in no other place mentioned, nor does he appear in the *dramatis personae*. Indeed, her ability to claim to be this figure relies largely on his being imaginary – or at the very least upon the fact that he has never seen at court in Rhodes.

⁵⁴ Andrew Gurr has suggested a double sexual innuendo here: (i) that the average bride has already lost her maidenhead (a point that is developed in Kathleen McLuskie, *Renaissance Dramatists* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p. 196) and (ii) that a bridegroom "dies" in getting his wife's maidenhead.

⁵⁵ Juliet Fleming, 'The Ladies Man and the age of Elizabeth', in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, edited by James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 158.

Fleming's article concerns itself uniquely with the male-authored Renaissance prose texts that were published for (and purported to address themselves only to) women. She argues that such texts both display 'and attempt to enact the potential violence that women have to fear from the helpful male.' Such an argument seems to me, however, to have a particular resonance if it is also applied to the supposedly 'gynocentric' dramatic spaces that are constructed in an all-male theatrical context (and are especially true of the way in which female characters are subtly co-opted into an affirmation of patriarchal values in plays such as *The Maid's Tragedy*). Also interesting on this question is Fiona McNeill, 'Gynocentric London Spaces: (Re)Locating Masterless Women in Early Stuart Drama', *Renaissance Drama* XXVIII (1997), pp. 195 – 244.

⁵⁶ Jane Gallop, 'Why Does Freud Giggle When Women Leave the Room?', in *Psychoanalysis and ...*, edited by Richard Feldstein and Henry Sussmann (New York, 1990), p. 49. (Cited in Fleming, *The Ladies' Man*).

⁵⁷ Kathleen McLuskie, *Renaissance Dramatists*, p. 196.

⁵⁸ For an excellent discussion of this phenomenon, see Peter Stallybrass, *Transvestism and the Body Beneath*.

⁵⁹ McLuskie, *Renaissance Dramatists*, p. 197.

⁶⁰ See Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: The Athlone Press, 1994), vol. II, p. 788.

In Jonson's *Alchemist*, Dol enters raving and Sir Epicure Mammon is told, with a pun on appease, 'You must never hope to lay her now' (IV.v. 24). In Shirley's *Lady of Pleasure*, a string of synonyms reveals 'We could not get a lay, a tumbler, a device, a bona roba For any money' (V.i.). Both instances are cited in Williams, *Dictionary*.

⁶¹ See Williams, *Dictionary*, vol. I, p. 371.

⁶² See Isabella in *Measure for Measure* (II.iv. 101) 'Th'impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies, And strip myself to death as to a bed That longing hath been sick for, ere I'd yield My body up to shame'; Antony in *Antony and Cleopatra* (IV. xiv. 99) 'I'll be A bridegroom in my death, and run to it As to a lover's bed'; and Cleopatra in the same (V.ii. 294) 'The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch, Which hurts and is desir'd'.

⁶³ As I have discussed in chapter two, the earth (as a celestial body) was feminised in Plato's *Symposium*. The more literal earth (of agricultural soil) to which Aspatia here refers also had scores of overtly feminine sexual overtones in the folkloric literature from which early-modern drama sprang – principally arising from its figuration as the 'womb of mother earth' (from which all life arose) in pagan harvest rituals such as the ploughing of corn dolls, the tradition of the year king, the figurative insemination of the earth in maypole dancing and so on.

⁶⁴ Anne M. Haselkorn, 'Sin and the Politics of Penitence: Three Jacobean Adulteresses', in *The Renaissance Woman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, edited by Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press), p. 119 – 120.

⁶⁵ William Shullenberger, '“This for the most wrong'd of women”: A Reappraisal of *The Maid's Tragedy*' *Renaissance Drama* (New Series) XIII (1982), p. 154

⁶⁶ Shullenberger, *Most wrong'd of women*, p. 141.

⁶⁷ McLuskie, *Renaissance Dramatists*, p. 193.

⁶⁸ See Chapter II (p. 58) in relation to Falstaff (and *Mankind's*) use of the term 'womb' for 'wound.'

⁶⁹ Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece* (1606 – 8) verse 207, and Thomas Middleton, *A Mad World my Masters* (1604 – 7) IV.i. 62. Both examples are cited in Williams, *Dictionary*, vol. III, p. 1468.

⁷⁰ *Diverting Post* 27 (21 – 28 April, 1705). The use of 'vein' as a metaphor for the hymen was common long before the early eighteenth century, however, as is testified by the line in Furnivall's *Love Songs* (15) in which a 'physician-lover': "went too't, and found out the vaine Where as her paine did lye." Dekker uses 'vein' as a general reference to female genitalia, in *II Honest Whore*, when Hippolito is outraged by his wife's supposed infidelity: "To sate your lust, you would loue a Horse, a Beare, A croaking Toade, so your hot itching veines Might haue their bound." (III.i. 177). All examples cited in Williams, *Dictionary*, pp. 1468 – 1469.

⁷¹ I am grateful to Professor Hal Cook, of the History of Medicine Faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for pointing out to me the Renaissance correlation between male nosebleeds and female menstruation (as similar forms of purgation). Professor Cook also graciously directed me towards an informed discussion of the phenomenon in the medical section of Ian MacLean's *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 28 – 46.

⁷² To separate these definitions out a little: the *OED* glosses the verb surfeit as "Excess, superfluity; excessive amount of something" and the past participle, surfeited, as "fed or filled to excess by or as by over feeding." The word 'foul' is glossed as "Charged with defiling or noxious matter."

⁷³ The *OED* glosses purgation as follows: "the discharge of waste matter from the body; excretion or evacuation [...] Menstruation" and gives the following early modern examples: B. Goodge, *Heresbach's Husband IV* (1586) p. 190.b "The roote [...] is good against [...] strangurie, and restraint of women's purgations" and Boate, *Ireland's Natural History* (1645) p. 141. "Among the women are several found, who do not only retain their natural purgations, but even their fruitfulness, above the age of fifty yeares". As may also be seen from Appendix I to this dissertation (detailing the case of Marie le Marcis), the word *purgation* was also the common French term for menstruation.

⁷⁴ Randall Cotgrave, *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611) translates the French word *Tigresse* as 'a Tigresse, a she Tiger' and Massinger's *Renegado* contains the following observation: 'If Christian's have mothers, sure they share in the Tigress' fierceness.' (III.v.). Evadne is not the only Renaissance woman for whom the feminine option of the word is shunned in favour of an appropriation of the sex, as well as the vicious nature, of the male Tiger however. In Shakespeare's *III Henry VI*, Richard, Duke of York describes Joan of Arc as 'She wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France [...] like an Amazonian trull [...] O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide! (I.iv. 111 ff).

⁷⁵ Anon, *Hæc Vir: or the Womanish Man* (London, 1620), sig. C3^v- C4^r.

⁷⁶ Anon, *Hic Mulier: or the Man-woman* (London, 1620), sig. B^v.

Chapter V:

Anatomy Theatre and Private Theatre Architecture: Delineating and Staging the Anatomised Body in Early Modern London

D'am. A Boone, my Lords. I begge a Boone.

1. lud. What's that my Lord?

D'am. His body when t'is dead for an Anatomie.

2. lud. For what my Lord?

D'am. Your vnderstanding still come [sic] short o'mine
 I would finde out by his Anatomie;
 What thing there is in Nature more exact,
 Then in the constitution of my selfe.
 Me thinks, my parts, and my dimensions, are
 As many, as large, as well compos'd as his;
 And yet in me the resolution wants,
 To die with that assurance as he does.
 The cause of that, in his Anatomie
 I would find out [...]

Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy*, 1611.¹

I

D'Amville, Tourneur's titular atheist, is the first character in early modern English drama to articulate a desire to 'anatomise' a fellow character from which it may be inferred that a realistic staging of 'anatomie' (by which I mean a theatrical representation of human dissection that is based on a literal, rather than metaphorical, reading of the term) must necessarily follow. His monologue is no precursor to the sort of literary trope found elsewhere in Renaissance texts; its language is unambiguous.² No verbal rhetoric is intended here, no painstakingly detailed character description or close behavioural observation, but rather the clinical dissection of his nephew's freshly decapitated cadaver – and the subsequent explanation of its interior significances before a public theatre audience. D'Amville's 'anatomie' is thus intended to engage with the illocutionary speech acts and demonstrative performances of the barber surgeon, rather than the rhetoric of the poet. Its aim is the discovery, notation and communication of a corporal topography that will, it is hoped, connect human physiology to character action and thus negate a Christian God, faith, afterlife and spirituality. The presentation

of *visual* evidence – drawn from staged evisceration – is thus essential to Tourneur's project, and is intended to replace the verbal and mind's-eye-allusion of mere poetry.

Rejection of a whole genre of literary 'anatomies' is imperative to the heresy of D'Amville's corporal proposition. In order to divorce a sense of faith from the pre-executionary assurance that is displayed by his nephew, scientific literalism – rather than literary analogy – must be concretely *enacted*. The performatives of the *theatrum anatomicum* thus form the bulwark of Tourneur's radical theatrical proposition. Toppling the theological construct of faith requires this atheist to strip away the flesh of a literary convention and to reveal the flayed muscle of its spectacular scientific counterpart. A theatrical re-enactment (in which this quasi-anatomist 'eviscerates' some 'cadaver' – and represents the process as a philosophical definition of his dissected subject's hidden bodily recesses as behaviourally significant – as a biological machine) is therefore the crux of D'Amville's proto-Cartesian project.

One inevitable result of this monologue, however, is that it leads Tourneur's spectators to believe that they will actually see a dramatic conclusion to *The Atheist's Tragedy* in which the organs of a decapitated and etiolated 'Charlemont' are accounted for on a counterfeit dissection slab whilst they *hear* his banal serenity explained as phenomenologically non-religious. A histrionic subversion of scientific ritual is thus intended to assert the absence of divinity as some kind of material absolute. As D'Amville himself maintains: exterior 'parts' or 'dimensions' can provide no clear evidence in such cases. When profound and palpable alternatives to spirituality are sought, the atheist investigator must turn to the body *within*. Tourneur's audience must therefore be made to witness an anatomy lecture.

Practically of course, if D'Amville were allowed to enact such heresy before his spectators, one actor would have to be seen to incise and eviscerate a blood drenched representation of another's cadaver whilst explaining the behavioural significance of its (pretended) internal physiology on stage.³ The narrative conclusion that we find in the 1611 quarto of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, however, makes no provision for such a radical theatrical prospect – and we see instead that Tourneur chose to write a rather 'slapstick' execution for his would-be anatomist (and one that entirely shuns the sanguine voyeurism that is inherent in D'Amville's proposed anatomical demonstration). That a writer should choose to do this – despite a price that momentarily totters his work into dramatic territory belonging more properly to farce – is worthy of note.⁴

The dramaturgical pragmatism of killing D'Amville off clearly raises more – and perhaps larger – questions than those for which space allows examination here. Leaving the dissection scene unstaged (indeed, replacing it with immediate recantation, the offer of self-sacrifice and a piece of totally implausible auto-mutilation) clearly circumvents the social, theological, moral and dramatic tensions that would have been present in D'Amville's proposed dissective stage

business. But why *should* the prospect of radical theatricality be replaced by the dramatic inertia (or at best farce) of this atheist's indecorous demise? When the fifth act's anatomical finalé is withdrawn, spectators might justifiably leave this theatre feeling somewhat cheated. Why, they might ask, were the flickering promise of staged evisceration *and* the agent of that subversive action both simultaneously snuffed out in a piece of staging as ham-fisted as the axemanship that is required within it? Why was the promise of dissective spectacle denied in the closing moments of this play? Why was no actor permitted to use some inanimate stage property or [feignedly in-] animate actor's body to represent the disgorging of Charlemont's cadaver to which tantalising allusion had here been made before galleries packed with paying spectators? Why does the action instead grind to an ineffectual halt, suspended in a dramatic no-mans-land between these attempted usurpation(s) of executioner and anatomist? Why is the narrative left dangling in a thematically un-fulfilling vacuum? The shambolic dénouement that replaces D'Amville's proposed dissection may only graciously be termed anything other than clumsy and premature, so why was it that the more spectacular conclusion to this piece was so crassly snuffed out? Why does this atheist fail even to execute his nephew? Why, instead, in his very attempt at so doing, does Tourneur see to it that D'Amville: 'raises up the Axe [and] strikes out his owne braines'?⁵

Whilst it is, perhaps, more frustrating for D'Amville than it is for his spectators that his attempted execution should culminate in an asinine and inept auto-mutilation (because his fumbling axemanship *does* kill him, after all), given our understanding that neither this atheist-and-would-be-anatomist nor his criminal-and-would-be-subject exist outside the fictive world of dramaturgical constructs, such unfortunate events should, conceivably, concern us *more* as evidence of a directly antithetical *convenience* for the real characters operating behind all this action – Tourneur and his players – because D'Amville's suicidal swoop marks as clear a [mis]stroke of fortune for them as it does for the fictional Charlemont whom it saves – and it would consequently appear that it is precisely *through* furnishing D'Amville with this absurd and final act of incompetence that they can extricate themselves from the difficult moral (not to mention *theatrical*) position in which they have been placed subsequent to his 'anatomie' monologue. By eliminating their would-be-atheist-eviscerator Tourneur's players are no longer expected to show a staged representation of human anatomy. A malodorous stench begins to waft from this sly piece of 'character assassination.' Let us follow our noses a little in order to sniff out its cause ...

It might seem logical to account for the absence of a dissection scene in one of three ways:⁶

- (i) By looking for evidence that links this omission to the *architectural* limitations of Tourneur's theatre(s) – and therefore to interpret it as evidence of a mid-Jacobean public stage that was architecturally unsuited to (or technically incapable of) the representation of dissective spectacle.
- (ii) By means of a conspiracy theory that [like all the best conspiracy theories, almost unprovably] interprets the omission as sinister evidence of censorial pressure exercised by some powerful body that bore down on the writer and forced him to cut his work.⁷

or

(iii) By reading the speech – perhaps more simply – as a literary *trope* (indicating that verbal allusions to dissection were enough to satisfy an audience's desire for such sanguine corporal exhibition).

So that it might logically follow that:

(i.i) It is probable that Tourneur wrote a great dissection scene, but subsequently overheard voices at rehearsal whispering: "Nice one Cyrill But how we gonna to *stage* it?" causing him to realise the practical difficulties inherent in his project – and to drop a scene that had worked well enough on paper but that, unfortunately, generated practical problems too gargantuan to surmount when moving from page to stage.

(ii.i) The retention of D'Amville's initial monologue is clear textual evidence of Tourneur informing his spectators of an original intention to go through with a staged dissection; but that his company had been *forced* from so doing by some moral, legal or religious censorship that prohibited their mounting of the more risqué and spectacular original version (such censorship, or the threat of it, either acting directly on the company, or writer, or both – and perhaps through the Revels Office – or by waking a 'subconscious policeman' in either (or both) of them that gave rise to a self-imposed cut before submission of a finalised script).

or

(iii.i) It is simply the case that the speech is poetic hyperbole and there was never any intention to show a representation of physical dissection on stage at all.⁸

Critically watertight cases explaining the omission could, certainly, be constructed for all three of the above scenarios: It is doubtless true that the theatrical 'faking' of dissection in a manner that satisfied an audience's desire to witness the 'gore and wonder' of genuine dissection (an increasingly fashionable spectator event in northern Europe at that time) would have been difficult.⁹ It is also true that there would have been those in religious and medical communities who would have been ready to protest vociferously at the sacrilege of treating the holy microcosmographic representation of God's creation, the body of man, in such manner before the uneducated groundlings of a public theatre (drama being the mere trivial pursuit of public entertainment – as opposed to the serious and high-brow educationalism that constituted the authentic anatomy lecture). As we also know, the City Fathers were keen to seize upon *any* anti-theatrical polemic in order to justify their attacks on theatrical institutions – and writers clearly had to be careful. It might even be argued that a fashionable poetic tradition that made frequent and explicit verbal references to anatomy and dissection rendered the mechanics of a physical staging somewhat superfluous.

It is not too difficult to see where Tourneur was coming from in hinting at the atheist anatomy lesson: it combined a fashionable poetic conceit with visually powerful and spectacularly bloodthirsty science, all wrapped up in the context of a challenge to orthodox religion – it is very much the 'meat and potatoes' of Jacobean tragedy. Despite positing a plethora of possibilities, however, it is impossible to define exactly *why* Tourneur stopped short of what may clearly be indicated as the logical conclusion to his play by D'Amville's V.ii. 'anatomie' monologue.

II

Taking a few moments to contextualise the third of the above scenarios for explaining this omission, it may prove valuable to gloss, parenthetically, over the ways in which medical vocabulary (and particularly the terminology of dissection) were appropriated (both through allusion and in direct citation) in the literary discourses of lyric (and especially love) poetry during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.¹⁰

Elite schools of late-Baroque French poetry, the English prose of Robert Burton and the verse of poets such as Sidney, Spenser and Donne have all recently become the subject of criticism that has sought to establish a transnational *œuvre* in which dissective imagery is seen to constitute the primary *locus* of erotic energy – and in which somatic perception is the principal intellectual backdrop. English poetry from the late-sixteenth century onwards has thus been argued to have taken up and augmented the growing recourse to corporal tropes, images and metaphors that was evident in continental European literature during the late Renaissance. Such fascination with the corporal (stretching its roots down through the canon to brush references to the de-contextualised female body-parts of Petrarch and the French *blasonneurs*) typically rendered the (specifically female) body into its constituent anatomical parts in order, variously, to praise (or mock) such organs as eyes and lips, or such skin surfaces as foreheads, stomachs, necks, cheeks and occasionally – if scurrilously and anonymously – arses.¹¹ The transition from references to external physiology (or physiognomy), through the employment of increasingly focused anatomical allusions, to description of the interior body itself and eventually to the *ars erotica* of dissective acts may be linked, in French poetry, it is claimed, to a juxtaposition of the iconographic tropes of medieval *blasons* against the fascination with anatomical science that was displayed at François I's Fontainebleau court (where the popularity of physiological studies, particularly those of Leonardo Da Vinci, has been argued to have had a great deal of influence over representations of the body in the poetic output of a coterie of fashionable court writers). French poets such as Scève, Belleau, Chapuys and Marot are thus argued to be the somatic influences of the English poetry of Sidney and Spenser – and the chief exponent who is said to have later taken up (and modified) this increasingly anatomical tradition in England (and in whom references to the act of dissection and the interior body may be abundantly found) is argued to have been Donne (to whom analysis will later briefly turn concerning the sexual, scatological and anatomical uses of the English blazon during the early-seventeenth century).

Perhaps then, assimilating this parenthetical gloss and shifting to adopt a critical perspective that allows one to interpret D'Amville's monologue as poetry, a critic might infer that Tourneur presumed upon an understanding of 'anatomie' as *literary conceit* by his audience; that D'Amville's monologue is thus merely a verbal allusion to dissection – one that an audience were intended to listen to and process in a literary and imagerial sense that was entirely divorced from

their observational role as theatrical spectators – that during this brief point in the action at least, a *spectator* was expected to be an *auditor*. Acceptance of such a supposition would certainly sustain conclusion that there really wasn't any necessity for Tourneur to furnish further 'ocular proof' of this 'anatomie' – since his audiences' minds' eyes had already 'seen' the 'scene' directly upon hearing D'Amville's verse.¹² The speech might thus be interpreted as *both* the promise of anatomical spectacle *and* the provision of it by means of a rhetorical device. No denial of spectacle would exist in such a reading, since depiction occurred in the mind. *However ...* I would like to flag up at this point the fact that such an argument relies somewhat (too) heavily (for my liking) upon a (rather problematic and formalist) notion of the public theatre as an environment in which the oral transmission and aural reception of *language* was entirely transcendent to the physical presentation and visual observation of *spectacle* – despite the latter being *the essential difference* that clearly distinguished theatrical from poetic entertainment. Needless to say, such a reading *also* presupposes that every audience member was mentally equipped with a mind's eye image library that was *capable* of re-creating a spectacle that they had already *witnessed*; a presumption that – given the prescriptive legislation governing the practice of anatomy in early modern England *and* the demographic composition of public theatres – is extremely tenuous.

So then, poetic conceits and oral stages notwithstanding, the nagging possibility that Tourneur initially *did* intend to stage some form of dissection scene, but was forced for some moral reason or other into aborting it, cannot be completely discounted by *any* analysis. Choosing one of the above three hypothesis as *the* definitive explanation of Tourneur's omission is therefore somewhat ill advised, because support may be drawn from only the slightest of evidence. One simply cannot *know* whether the anatomical image of V. ii. 145-53 was never in line for visual development because Tourneur was making reference to a poetic conceit; whether it was denied its physical staging by the practical limitations of his theatrical environment; or that it was deleted because his company were coerced into providing the conventional and punitive narrative closure of an atheist and would-be (illegal) anatomist getting his just deserts in a play that was forced, somewhat slavishly, to follow a quasi-religious morality tradition prescribed by the powerful and vociferous authorities of Renaissance London (and policed by the hegemonic intervention of cultural censorship). Fortunately for us, however, deciding the force behind this editorial 'blue pencil' (or divining whether a dissection scene existed in manuscript at all) will not here prove necessary. For my present exercise, reading the clumsy demise of D'Amville as any or all of: (i) censorship circumscribing dramaturgical intention; (ii) outdoor public theatres with neither the architectural ambience of the anatomy hall nor the scenographic sophistry requisite to its emulation; or (iii) a theatrical tradition in which poetry could *substitute* for dramatic spectacle will suffice.

Given this preamble, then, let me pause here and note the bare facts. They are two: (i) an actor, or actors, playing the fictive role of D'Amville on several *public* theatre stages around the year

1611 mentioned his intention to undertake a literal 'anatomie.' (ii) The dramatist responsible failed to develop this reference into fully staged dissective spectacle.

Let me now move on to analysis of another early-modern playwright who *does* provide instances of staged anatomy – and to an examination of the complex architectural and philosophical reasons that account for his inclusion of that which Tourneur had omitted – together with the *implications* of such subsequent stagings for social and theatrical historians.

III

Sixty years after Tourneur had evidently recognised the growing desire of English audiences to have a more clinical and voyeuristic tradition of bloodshed referred to on stage (than that of the Elizabethan history play at least), Edward Ravenscroft presented his spectators with the intense and liminal *frissons* that interplay between an anatomist and his 'living-dead' subject could produce.¹³ In *The Anatomist, or The Sham Doctor*, characters are not prohibited from performing in a clearly staged scenographic representation of an anatomy hall. By the Restoration, then, dissection (now fused with the erotic in a way that would ultimately lead to the sexually liminal phenomenon of early nineteenth-century Gothic Horror in the works of Bram Stoker and Mary Shelley) seems to have apparently become a dramatic *fact*; but why should it be that only sixty years after *The Atheist's Tragedy* Ravenscroft was allowed the histrionic representation of anatomy, death and dismemberment that Tourneur had been denied? Why was it no longer necessary to resort to a clumsy *deus ex machina* in order to prevent such a scene from taking place? Well, I consider the answer to these questions to lie in two areas: Firstly, because Ravenscroft's staged bloodshed is neither large-scale nor epic. The hangover of Elizabethan Public Theatre's battle scenes (that we witnessed thumping on stage in Tourneur's axe-trick) has been entirely replaced by the personalised, erotic, intellectual and quasi-scientific *voyeurism* that constituted an entirely new representation of exploratory anatomy; and secondly, because *The Anatomist* presents dissective study within the context of an Age of Reason (rather than in a scientific framework that sought to confine human anatomy as a *Microcosmographia* of divine creation) the *theatrum anatomicorum* had therefore become fair dramatic game. Implicit in this shift, however, is the notion that, somewhere in-between *The Atheist's Tragedy* and *The Anatomist* – between the immense and scenically denuded public amphitheatres of London's Renaissance liberties and the scenographically sophisticated shutters of its opulent Restoration stages – there had been a gradual process of *relocation* in which both anatomy itself *and* stage violence had transformed into a decidedly more private (and anthropocentric) form of voyeurism.

In the remainder of this chapter – and in my concluding one – I consequently intend to argue that this transformation – from the impersonal brutality of battle to the personal violence of evisceration (and from expedient censorial intervention to overtly eroticised and voyeuristic

spectacle) took place in the Private Theatres of Caroline London; that D'Amville's monologue should therefore simply be identified as an initial *murmur* in a series of metamorphosing anatomical representations that swiftly began to infest London's stages in the twenty years prior to their closure in 1642. Significantly, however, I am going to argue that *one* theatre above all others was to dominate in the development of theatrical representations of anatomy's visceral voyage into the human interior – and to develop a tradition in which execution and dissection were *conjoined* in the single phenomenon of 'dissective murder'.¹⁴ It is therefore to the production of plays by a single writer – and in a unique theatrical environment – that I shall focus my attention in what remains of this dissertation.

IV

I believe that the missing link between Tourneur's denial of anatomical spectacle and Ravenscroft's unashamed provision for it lies in the graphic and often clinical representations of fratricide or uxoricide that seem to have been visited on the bodies of boy-actors playing tragic-heroines in Christopher Beeston's Phoenix during the late 1620s and 1630s. The tragedies that John Ford composed for performance in this theatre appear to me to displace the act of murder from its social or political domain in order to create a new phenomenality of violence in which masculine aggression is enacted almost uniquely as a function of *anatomical* imperatives. As I intend to demonstrate (primarily by way of close textual reading in my next chapter) Ford's work for this theatre fashioned a dramatic *oeuvre* in which male-actor subjects repeatedly appear to display an overriding sexual passion for the histrionically created 'female' objects of their desire – but it is also an *oeuvre* in which, for some reason, male sexual obsession repeatedly erupts into *anatomically* configured murder and violence.

In my interrogation of this phenomenon, I intend to pose the question as to whether such sadistic attacks upon the 'female' stage-body were constructed in relation to anatomy in order to *legitimise* the murder of Ford's histrionic 'women' (and that they therefore set up evisceration as a cathartic *relief* of the pent-up – and sexually linear – masculine desires that various female characters frustrate, repress or interrupt in manifest ways during the course of Ford's narratives), or whether Ford's conflation of dissective spectacle with graphic scenes of sexual violence was, in actual fact, intended as a *critique* of the objectification of the female body that was undertaken by anatomists in the dissection halls of early-modern Europe.

In the moments in which the bodies of Ford's heroines are penetrated by the (invariably phallic) instruments of their dispatch, this dramatist certainly achieves a teleological climax to many of his dramaturgical energies; moreover, given that the 'women' who are murdered in Ford's plays are generally seen to be sexually 'deviant' in some way (in that they are adulterers, incestuous sisters or bigamous wives) female immolation seldom seems to be framed-up as an *entirely* contemptible act of masculine aggression – but is rather represented as a 'natural' assuagement

of frustrated male desire. Sexual murder accordingly appears to be enacted as a *relief* of unrequited male sexual advances in these plays – but it is also an anatomical *demonstration* of what Ford's texts subtly construct as aberrant and rapacious (yet essentialist and biologically determined) female libido. Despite all this, however, the question still remains as to whether Ford was *criticising* anatomy or *sanctioning* its misogynist epistemologies and methodologies.

In what follows, then, whilst I aim to argue that murder was profoundly *eroticised* by Ford, I will also put the case that it was, likewise, deliberately *clinicalised*. My proposition is that Ford's murderers purposely bring to mind the discretely *gendered* performatives of early-modern anatomy halls (in which female sexual and reproductive anatomies that had themselves only recently slipped out of the shackles of their definition as an inferior variant of masculinity in the 'one-sex' model were graphically explained, redefined and *re-mastered* by the male anatomists who displayed them). However, I also want to demonstrate how Fordian tragedy deliberately *usurps* the performatives of the anatomy lecture in order to present them as a conscious *inversion* of male and female culpability. Conventionally it was the *murderer* (as transgressor of the moral order) who became the *object* of dissection; yet in Ford – because murderers are allowed to don the metaphorical guise of the 'righteous anatomist' – the feigned death (and evisceration) of 'female' heroines seems to allow for a shift of blame from the male onto the female body.

The point that I want to stress is that, in killing and examining these boyish totems of rapacious 'female' sexuality, Ford's theatrical murderers *appear* to relocate female immolation as 'anatomy' – and that they therefore seem to render their murders retributive, punitive and – most importantly – *dissective* sacrifices of femininity on an altarian and patriarchal dissection slab. Fordian sexual murder was a staged spectacle that provided his theatrical audiences with a dissection of supposed 'female' forms that appears to have been entirely warranted as a result of the purported 'guilt' of his dramatic heroines – it consequently seems to *re-inscribe* the moral culpability of women in some anatomical or biological sense. Picking up where my analysis of *The Maid's Tragedy's* violent re-inscription of patriarchal control left off, then, the theatrical price of aberrant female sexuality in Ford seems (once again) to be the death of his female characters – but *more than this*, it now seems to be the case that female death is a phenomenon that leads automatically on to the re-location of female stage-bodies as the objects of a decidedly anatomical gaze; so *why* should this be?

In an attempt to answer this question, chapter six of this dissertation will close-read texts in order to demonstrate the ways in which Ford required his heroes to take on the anatomist's mantle that was denied to D'Amville – and consequently how he regularly furnished his audiences with the performance of decidedly anatomical sexual murders. In my next chapter I therefore hope to establish the *manner* in which the adult male actors who played characters such as Giovanni in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Frank in *The Witch of Edmonton* or Philippo Caraffa in *Love's Sacrifice*

all consequently became biological *ostensors* whose task it was to reveal the essentially deviant nature of femininity in the imagined physiology of a boy-actors' dead, or dying, heroine.

In this chapter, however, it is first my task to attempt to show the reasons *why* all of this theatrical 'anatomy' was enacted before the elite (and principally male) Private Theatre audiences who might *also* have frequented the *actual* dissective demonstrations of early-modern London. I hope to establish that, as a result of chance, Ford's dramas took place in a theatrical auditorium that was, in many ways, *architecturally analogous* to several early-seventeenth-century northern-European anatomy halls. As a result of this double edged approach, it is my intention to demonstrate both the reasons *why* Ford thought that his audiences were located in a structural environment that was remarkably similar to that in which actual anatomies were conducted – and also to comment upon some of the obvious *significances* of this fact. As the Fordian boy-actor-heroine dies, Thanatos appears to converge with Eros over his theatrical representation of the disgorged female cadaver. In response to this phenomenon, in a conjoined pair of closing chapters I will seek to demonstrate both the *manner* in which the real performances of female dissection can be closely mapped onto Ford's theatrical death scenes and the *implications* of that fact.

Before I move into my analysis of early-modern anatomy hall architecture, however, I want to make one (last) point about the theatrical *mechanics* of this phenomenon. Regardless of my own personal perspective in relation to the dramaturgical *intentions* behind Ford's literal and metaphorical 'anatomies', the question as to whether theatrical representations of female dissection helped to shape and reinforce, sought to emulate, or perhaps *critiqued* the attempted control over female anatomy and sexuality that was undertaken by the processes of Renaissance anatomy is unquestionably open to debate. That the theatrical phenomenon of dissective murder was entirely reliant upon the compliance of boy-actors would, however, seem to be clear – and for that reason, I want to stress here that my critical base-line throughout both of the following chapters is that without these boys' contractual obligation to act as the object of anatomical performances, theatrical 'dissection' could not have been represented at all. We therefore do well to remind ourselves repeatedly that it was not actresses, but *adolescent boys*, who nightly gave their bodies up to the representations of brutal incision, evisceration and dissection through which manufactured notions of 'female' sexual 'deviance' could be made manifest to theatrical audiences – and blanched out by these heroines' submission to death.

Just as the inanimate (and etiolated) female cadaver would 'perform' before the eyes of a *theatrum anatomicum's* audience, so the metaphorically dissected boy-actor would submit himself to the controlling hands of a dominant male in order to achieve a (second) whiteness (of *character*) as he expired – and all of this was done in make-up that presented another (third) whiteness: the pallid physical complexion for which all fashionable women strove. What is *essential* to bear in mind throughout these concluding chapters, then, is that in *both* institutions

(and structural environments), the articulate, animate and authentic *female* form was conspicuously absent – because it had been replaced by either a corpse, or a boy.

In the rest of this dissertation, I will therefore attempt to raise three major issues in relation to Ford's dramatic representation of gendered dissection:

(i): Why does the late-*English* transvestite acting tradition display a fascination with the anatomical murder of its female heroines that may not be seen in contemporaneous *European* traditions that used female actresses)?

(ii): In what ways do such scenes critique (or re-inscribe) misogynist society's creation and containment of female corporal (and sociological) identities – and how does the (rather phallic) rite of dissective *penetration* operate in the process?

and

(iii) What were the *power relations* within Caroline dramatic companies that allowed for boy-actors to give their bodies up repeatedly to such representations of butchery?¹⁵

When dramatic narratives define their female characters as transgressors of some moral order – even if the only evidence of promiscuity or infidelity is conjectural on the part of their murderers, or glib on the part of authority figures (in another unfortunate act five couplet a Papal Emissary declares “Of one so young, so rich in nature's store / Who could not say, 'tis pity she's a whore”...) – audiences were ineluctably led to believe that, since these women appear to have been legitimately ‘judged’ by the significant figures of patriarchal power and authority in their plays, they may subsequently be executed and have their bodies dissected in the same manner as the female felons who were transported from the gallows to London's authentic anatomy halls.

For financial reasons, Christopher Beeston's Phoenix may well have sought to [re]present the containment and reduction of femininity into an absolute physical commodity that was also enacted in the spectacular ‘scripts’ of the *theatrum anatomicorum* that it accidentally resembled; as I intend to demonstrate below, Ford's dramatic language and spectacle can be directly linked to the performatives of anatomists and surgeons in the rare public anatomical demonstrations that were conducted on female cadavers at the medical schools of Europe – as well as in Ford's contemporary London, Oxford and Cambridge – but was Ford (who was incidentally a Catholic – a point that will take on a special significance in the debate over the development of experimental anatomy) entirely *supportive* of the new, northern-European, *Protestant* and proto-Cartesian flourishing of anatomy?

V

Records show that whilst the needs of *scholastic* anatomy in England during the sixteen-twenties and thirties were increasingly catered for by secular law, the supply of cadavers was not adequate to provide for the rise in public dissection as fashionable *entertainment*. The London companies of the Barber Surgeons and the Royal College of Physicians both had rights for the

regular dissection of corpses prescribed by civil legislation dating from the mid-sixteenth century, but such law did not provide for regular *public* demonstrations. The Barber Surgeons had been limited to four corpses per annum by their Act of Union in 1540 and the Royal College of Physicians were still limited to only six cadavers a year when the act for an enlargement of the their provisions was passed in 1641.¹⁶ Evidently then, not all of those who wished to watch anatomy as a social distraction could do so.

Jonathan Sawday has recently drawn attention to the example of the Oxford Divine, George Hakewill, who, returning from travels abroad during which he had doubtless been impressed by such anatomical 'entertainments', observed in 1624:

I have not a little wondered [...] that an universitie so famous in forraine parts as this of Oxford, was never to my knowledge provided of a publique lecture in this kinde, till now.¹⁷

The poet John Hall (who was a friend of Hobbes and member of the influential Hartlib circle) also echoed, in 1649: 'Where have we *constant* reading on either quick or dead *Anatomies*'.¹⁸ The inference in both quotations is clear: demand from an educated and literary elite to see regular public anatomy demonstrations as *entertainment* manifestly outstripped supply – in England at least – well into the seventeenth century; for what business has a cleric or a poet at an anatomy lesson other than voyeuristic titillation? As has also often been argued, it was *precisely* such members of the new 'intellectual classes' who were increasingly becoming the audiences of London's club-like Private Theatres.¹⁹

As I have intimated above, whether inadequate provision for public anatomical demonstrations led Ford to exploit an architectural coincidence (that I shall explain below) simply in order to generate income through satisfying public appetite for anatomy as voyeuristic spectacle, or whether he intended a more subtle critique of the processes of anatomy is unclear; but I shall here focus on the ways in which his hermetically-sealed (and masculine) production environment (in which young boys were themselves disempowered and silenced through age, apprenticeship to the guild-member adult actors who held senior positions in the companies, or by their position as 'scholars') created a power dynamic in which the female stage-body became a fleshed-out marionette in the hands of the significant sharers in the processes of theatrical production: older male actors, producers and playwrights. That boys playing female parts had little or no voice in deciding the thematic content of their dramas in ways in which their respected and famous female counterparts in continental Europe did has become a critical commonplace; but where, precisely, behind these facts does the secret of Ford's bloody success lie? Is Ford's tragic *œuvre* steeped in the language of the surgeons' halls in order to consistently *reinforce* notions of the female body as an objectified slab of meat on the dissection table, or, rather, because he sought to *undermine* the actions of anatomy through provision of a metaphorical and theatrical alternative to it?

Despite much work on anatomical allusions in poetry, this link between the anatomical body and the actor-as-sexual-murderer in the Private Theatre of Caroline London remains relatively uncharted territory. Before I examine play-texts in chapter six, however (and in order to explain the shift in dramatic *taste* that accounts for the change in narrative outcomes between Tourneur and Ford), the changing morality by which dissection was judged needs to be outlined; an architectural survey of English *theatrum anatomicorum* undertaken; and an analysis of the construction history of one Private Theatre (in conjunction with an examination of its operational conventions) summarized. As I hope to demonstrate in this chapter, it is only through such a *plural* analysis that the significance of anatomical spectacle at Christopher Beeston's Phoenix during the 1620s and 1630s may begin to be explained.

VI

The generally suggested dates for the first performances of *The Broken Heart*, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *Love's Sacrifice* are 1629, 1630 and 1631 respectively;²⁰ and although the two decades between the first staging of *The Atheists Tragedy* and the production of these Fordian dramas does not constitute a period that is generally taken to represent a significant watershed in theatre history, they *do* form years during which much changed in the world of anatomical science²¹ – because Ford's principal tragic opus was written and staged amidst the intellectual turmoil that was generated by the greatest period of somatic change (both philosophical and scientific) to take place in early-modern Europe, the intellectual flux of which was to have a direct influence on the dissective culture of northern Europe, on the intellectual concerns of Ford's elite audiences and upon his dramaturgy itself.

The point that I want to make is that Ford's tragic theatre ran *concurrent* to a scientific movement that was beginning to re-define its philosophical framework in order, eventually, to become largely independent of the grasp of theology. The first half of the seventeenth century has frequently been proposed as a period in which the liminal (and yet quasi-religious) activity of anatomy was radically re-defining itself as the secular, philosophical and Cartesian 'New-Science' of biology. Accepting the view that the years 1628 - 1638 constitute the experimental and formative backbone of what later emerged as 'New Science'²² allows for an explanation of the shifting attitudes towards staged dissection that appear to have occurred between the societies of Tourneur and Ford (and a location of the latter – to a far greater degree than the former – within an intellectual framework that was in the throes of rejecting dissection as religious ritual and choosing rather to embrace it as pure, reasoned scientific inquiry). In such a context, the possibility of appropriating anatomy as justifiable theatrical spectacle may begin to be more easily understood (together with the notion that Ford's Private Theatre engaged with the philosophical debates of 'New Science' precisely *because* its elite market supported the presentation of plays that contained spectacle – and debate – concerning such intellectual

subject matter). Perhaps, then, Beeston's Phoenix did 'cash in' on the bourgeois desire to witness anatomical demonstration and hear Neo-Platonic, Paracelsian, Catholic, Protestant, Vesalian, Harvean and Cartesian views of the dissected body pitted against each other.

It must be remembered that the decade that embraces the entirety of Ford's major tragic output *also* saw publication of the first great Dutch anatomists' major corporal investigations, the anatomical discoveries of the Englishman Dr. William Harvey and Descartes' seminal *Discours de la Méthode*. Between 1628 and 1639 these Northern European intellectuals began a journey that would eventually wrestle corporal understanding away from medieval and early-Renaissance microcosmographic views of man as the divine map of God's universal creation and container of the immortal soul (the dominant philosophy of the Vesalian school that was still evident in the works of English anatomists from Vicary to Crooke) towards a late-seventeenth-century Cartesian view of the body as biological machine.²³ The publication of Harvey's *de motu cordis* (in Leiden in 1628) provided the intellectual classes with a significant anatomical watershed: it was the first early-modern scientific theory for the function of the heart and the circulation of the blood. It was also a treatise that had been born out of detailed *dissective* studies undertaken over the preceding decade at both the University of Padua and the London College of Physicians. Contemporary to Harvey, Descartes was also amassing valuable information from anatomical science and developing the philosophy with which he would begin to liberate the soul from the body. That Descartes had direct access to Harvey's work is clear: *de motu cordis* was first published in Leiden, the flourishing centre of Protestant anatomy to which the Frenchman was drawn away from his Catholic Paris. It is no coincidence that Descartes' investigations began in the year of Harvey's first publication.²⁴ In many ways, 1628 marks the cusp in a re-definition of human anatomy – and the principal formulatory ideas of Cartesian philosophy and 'New Science' thus began to be developed in England and Holland precisely *during* the second and third decades of the seventeenth century.

In a letter to his friend and mentor Mersenne in 1639, Descartes reflected upon 'much time [spent] on dissection *during the last eleven years*'²⁵ – and it should not be forgotten that it was in the Protestant Low Countries, rather than in Catholic France, that Descartes chose to undertake this work. Of Holland as a centre for anatomical science at the time Sawday has observed:

It was in Holland, particularly at the University of Leiden, and in the recently founded University of Amsterdam (1632), that public anatomy was to reach its zenith.²⁶

commenting upon Descartes' fascination with any manifestation of the dissected and dismembered carcass:

In the spring of 1629 Descartes moved permanently to Holland, living first at Franeker, then (1630) in Amsterdam, followed by Leiden (1632). In Amsterdam, Descartes lived in the Kalverstraat quarter of the city [...] the quarter inhabited by the city's butchers. There he was to be found purchasing carcasses for dissection.²⁷

In relation to Ford's theological position, it is also worth stressing that Holland and England do not form mere accidents of geography in the development of Cartesian 'New Science'. The transition that was forced upon European anatomy by the assertions of Descartes, by Harvey and the Dutchman Dr. Nicholas Tulp gained much of its immense cultural power specifically *because* it took the body away from an eighty-five year old anthropocentric (and Catholic) view towards one that stressed the body's biological functionalism.²⁸ 'New Science' based itself on philosophical assertions that struggled to break the body free, if not from religion *per se*, at least from medieval *Catholic* theology. Whilst Descartes and Harvey both wrote during a backlash of vigorous Catholic defence that formed part of the immense counter-Reformation, they were relatively secure from persecution whilst working in Protestant realms (Galileo, for example – and by means of a contrast – received an *auto-da-fé* from the Saint-Office in Rome on June 22nd 1633, for his publication of *dialogus de systemate mundi*, in which Ptolemaic and Copernican systems were pitted against each other – a fact that perhaps led Descartes to renounce his own radical *tractatus de homine* and leave it un-published, apart from a Latin edition that emerged in Protestant Leiden in 1662, until the definitive French version that was translated, edited and published posthumously by his friend Clerselier as part of his *Œuvres* in 1664).²⁹ Both *Love's Sacrifice* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* were also entered on the Stationer's Register in a Protestant kingdom in 1633. As will be seen below, they are both plays that grappled with issues of Paracelsian³⁰ versus Cartesian corporeality – notions that were simultaneously worked through by the anatomists of Protestant England and the Low Countries.

Significantly then, representations of the corporal were shifting from the theological to the biological *for the first time* during the very years that Ford wrote his greatest tragedies. 'New Science' came to occupy great cultural and medical significance – and Protestant versus Catholic theology figured heavily in its conception. In 1543, Vesalius had published *de humani corporis fabrica* whilst occupying the chair of anatomy in the Catholic city of Padua. In 1628 Harvey had *left* Padua – as Descartes had left Paris – and was now working in a Protestant kingdom akin to that of the Dutch anatomists. *De motu cordis* looked at how an individual organ worked, irrespective of its supposed connection to the soul. Harvey seemed not obliged to define his heart as the physical seat of the divine creator located in the body of man. During the eighty five years between *de humani corporis fabrica* and *de motu cordis* the theologies of Erasmus, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin had given rise to a series of northern-European Reformations that had created an oppositional Protestant intellectual climate in England (and Holland) that allowed for new possibilities in medical research. Such information is essential to an understanding of the corporal fascination of a playwright tarred with the brush of Catholicism, and yet writing in perhaps the most staunchly Protestant kingdom in Europe.³¹ Whether or not Ford simply profited from the increased public interest in (and lack of provision for) public anatomy, or subtly defended anthropocentric Catholic views of the body that were rapidly retreating from the forefront of medical debate in order to critique the irreligious practices of early-modern anatomy, the reason as to *why* it was possible for him to assume anatomical themes *at all* undoubtedly lies

in the divide that 'New Science' was driving between medical and theological conceptions of the body – and the desire of elite audiences to witness that debate *in action*.

As has been noted above, the rationale taken on by Vesalian anatomists to explain the anatomised body had been predominantly based upon medieval humanist theology, the appropriation of Neo-Platonism and upon Patristic authority – but this was an approach that was almost entirely *rejected* by the new wave of proto-Cartesian anatomists. As Sawday has observed, the distinguished anatomists of mid-sixteenth century Catholic Italy had had to justify their taking corpses for dissection in spiritual terms due to the restrictive theological context of a largely Catholic continental Europe. In order to dissect bodies legitimately – and to construct their new understanding of the human form – the influential Italian anatomy schools of Vesalius, Columbus and Fallopius had thus been forced to fabricate 'maps' of the body that were also divine. Anatomists in Caroline England, and Holland, were working towards a culture of dissection that was relatively free from such theological restrictions. In their Protestant environment, anatomy developed as a more secular discourse and – significantly to my current inquiry – non-religious interpretations of the dissected body could begin to permeate the cultural identity of England from the sixteen-twenties onwards, thereby helping anatomy to become fair game for theatrical representation.³²

Interpretations of the human body from Vesalius' *fabrica* to Crooke's *Microcosmographia* had held that in the form of every human body lay a representation of the totality of divine creation. In such anatomies links were consistently made (and reinforced) between the human 'map' and the divine topography of the cosmos. Whilst such religious discourse clearly sprang more from pragmatic decisions to embrace the dominant theology of Western Europe (and thereby avoid persecution as heretics or atheists) than from the manifestation of any devout belief in Catholic theology, they still influenced sociological understanding of anatomy – and thus the context within which it operated – until the arrival of 'New Science'. Put simply: acceptance of (and acquiescence with) dominant Catholic religious orthodoxy *protected* the first anatomists and allowed them the freedom to dissect. At the same time, however, it placed both the anatomist and his work-place within a firmly religious context that severely hampered his objectivity *and* the possibility of the same subjects being addressed in other cultural arenas.

As a result, whilst the initial Vesalian 'mapping' of the human body in treatise after treatise indisputably represented an immense development in European corporal knowledge from that which had been expounded by the Greeks Hippocrates and Aristotle, or the 'Roman' ³³ Galen, it had severe *limitations* due to the framework of religious implication within which anatomists had necessarily bound themselves. Akin to the obsessive cartographic inclinations of the first age of European colonial expansion, the gains in 'mapped' corporal territory (and the concomitant published accounts of it) were vast, but needed to be repeatedly justified in religious terms. It has therefore been observed that during the Golden Age of Discovery both body and globe were

entities to be explored and charted, but that the desire for knowledge about bodies, like that for sovereignty over territory, was one that consistently had to be couched in religious terms. As Sawday has pointed out, the first wave of anatomical exploration appropriated fresh corpses in the name of God just as the explorers of the Americas had ravished virgin territories in the names of their Kings. The first anatomists' almost anthropophagistic consumption of corpses was justified by their claim that anatomical study made manifest the truth of humanist theology: that God himself was mapped out in the *Microcosmographia* of the body and that they, like priests, were making manifest an interpretation of the divine text in human form before their audiences. At the centre of these 'map-bodies' lay the heart – the seat of God in man and the symbol of religion at the centre of anatomical science. The soul was pinned to the body through this central figuration of one organ as the central presence of a divine creator. It is largely to do with the limitations of such theological links that anatomy had to re-invent itself as scientific *reason* in order to progress during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Harvey's choice of the *heart* as the object of his first enquiry therefore seems to have deliberately unseated God from his corporeal throne, thus paving the way for a liberation of the body from the soul. In this respect, it is interesting to note that Ford's principal anatomical concern was also the heart.

As I have demonstrated above, in 1611 *The Atheist's Tragedy* displayed a clear link between anatomy and the spiritual. D'Amville saw Charlemont's external body as equal to his own: 'Methinks my parts and my dimensions are / as many, as large, as well composed as his'; it was Charlemont's resolution to die – a spiritual trait – that was anathema to this atheist (and he therefore sought to overthrow a spiritual reading with a purely biological one). The way in which D'Amville's speech belongs to the debate surrounding Cartesian 'New Science' can now be more easily observed. Firmly rooted in D'Amville's intention is the belief that spiritual interpretations (such as faith) can be eliminated by a *biological* understanding of the body. The sociological framework of Tournier's 1611 society, however, dictated that an atheist had to be prevented from attempting this.

The parallels between D'Amville and the first anatomists are obvious. In the fifteen-forties and fifties men who worked in the field of charting the body knew that their activities could easily be forced back into the realm of the clandestine, the nocturnal and the illegal – it was un-sanctioned territory from which they had only recently emerged. The first anatomists understood that without religious significance their work would be forced to exist in the dangerously liminal twilight between accepted theology and heretical science. It was as a protective move, therefore, that they inscribed their work as often as they could with the language of deep religious significance. At the time of Da Vinci and Vesalius, the cutting up of bodies was still a highly suspect activity. It not only violated the divine creation of God in its human form but it also interfered with the accepted religious ceremonies surrounding death. The resurrected anatomised corpse made a poor partner for re-unification with the eternal soul. In September 1299 Pope Boniface VIII had issued the bull *detestande feritatis* which outlawed dispersed burial of Christians on pain of

excommunication – and the theological arguments preventing the (then fashionable) separation of the noble body from its internal organs held equally well for the dispersal of the anatomised criminal's corpse in the jars and cabinets of anatomy theatres.³⁴

Anatomists had to justify their practices theologically. If they did not, they walked on moral ice as thin as that which cracked under D'Amville. Da Vinci was consequently forced to undertake anatomical investigation for the purposes of artistic study in secret and at night;³⁵ Vesalius was likewise forced to construct a cadaver for use in medical research from dumped bodies, stolen clandestinely and at night, from grounds *outside* the city walls of Catholic Louvain.³⁶ D'Amville was, clearly, not so cautious. At the start of the seventeenth century his atheism therefore acted as the *primary* factor that precluded him from the safe practice of anatomical science. The character existed, as early anatomists and explorers did, on the limits of conventional society; yet, rather than *using* orthodox religion to justify his actions, he sought to overturn it. The view of D'Amville's death as divine retribution for seeking to remove a holy anatomical ritual from the confines of theology is thus supported by historical evidence that outlines the theological control of anatomical science during the mid-Renaissance.³⁷ In 1611, cultural and scientific landscapes were *approaching* change but were still such that, in order for an anatomist to escape the morally justified fate of D'Amville, he was obliged to go forward not with the flag of reason and abstract intellectual enquiry, but with the banner of orthodox religion and *microcosmographia*. Charlemont's 'resolution' was still a spiritual matter. It could not be explained by secular anatomy.

Until the *naissance* of 'New Science', then (in the sixteen-twenties and thirties), dissection was solely to be undertaken by the sanctioned anatomist whose holy text, the human body, could *only* be used to make manifest the divine nature of the cosmos in a quasi-religious environment. To represent dissection in a secular theatre would have sacrilegiously transgressed the delicately delineated boundaries of the worlds of science, religion and entertainment. Following the climate of anti-theatrical prejudice that had dominated the closing years of the sixteenth century, the English stage was still no place to do this. Even anatomists had to be careful in the definition of their operational environments – and the anatomy halls of the first sanctioned physicians' companies could not themselves be seen as overtly *theatrical* in their layout. If anatomists claimed that their work was a form of religious activity, they were also obliged to stress the links between their operational environment and religious architecture, rather than the structural design of theatrical auditoria.

VII

It is a well documented fact that France and Italy had more anatomy theatres than England during the sixteenth century. The explosion in anatomical investigation that followed publication

of Vesalius' *fabrica* in 1543 led to the building of a wide range of *theatrum anatomicorum* in many of the major European cities and centres of learning (including celebrated examples in Padua, Rome, Bologna, Montpellier and Paris). Each theatre was attached to a prominent school of medicine and each vied for academic and cultural recognition – a special rivalry existing between the two great universities of Padua and Montpellier. Operating in Catholic cities, such sites have also been demonstrated to have appropriated an architectural style that displays overtly religious overtones.

Just as the linguistic style of early medical treatises reveals theology to have been dominant in the *poetics* of writing the body, so the sketches, extant plans and frontispieces to early anatomical volumes in which *theatrum anatomicorum* are shown (together with evidence drawn from surviving architectural structures themselves) reveal religious authority to have been deeply inscribed in the *design* and *decoration* of early dissective environments. Almost all Renaissance French and Italian anatomy halls consequently appear to have been furnished in circular or elliptical design with fittings and seating radiating outwards from the central figure of the anatomist at his altarian dissection table. As in churches, a large, expensively bound and precious text is ubiquitously evident on a lectern – from which authoritative volume passages from the anatomy were read (often in Latin) while the demonstrator (or anatomist himself) enacted his ostensive performances. This clearly religious focus clearly went some way towards ensuring that the congregated spectators read the body as a sacrament and the anatomist as a priest whose task it was to make the power and beauty of divine creation manifest in the body of man.

The architectural precedent for this early style of European Renaissance anatomy theatre has been demonstrated to be the basilica church or *tempietto* (see fig. 2 below) – a structure that defined its own circularity from the design of classical temples (fig. 1) and the outstretched figure of man in

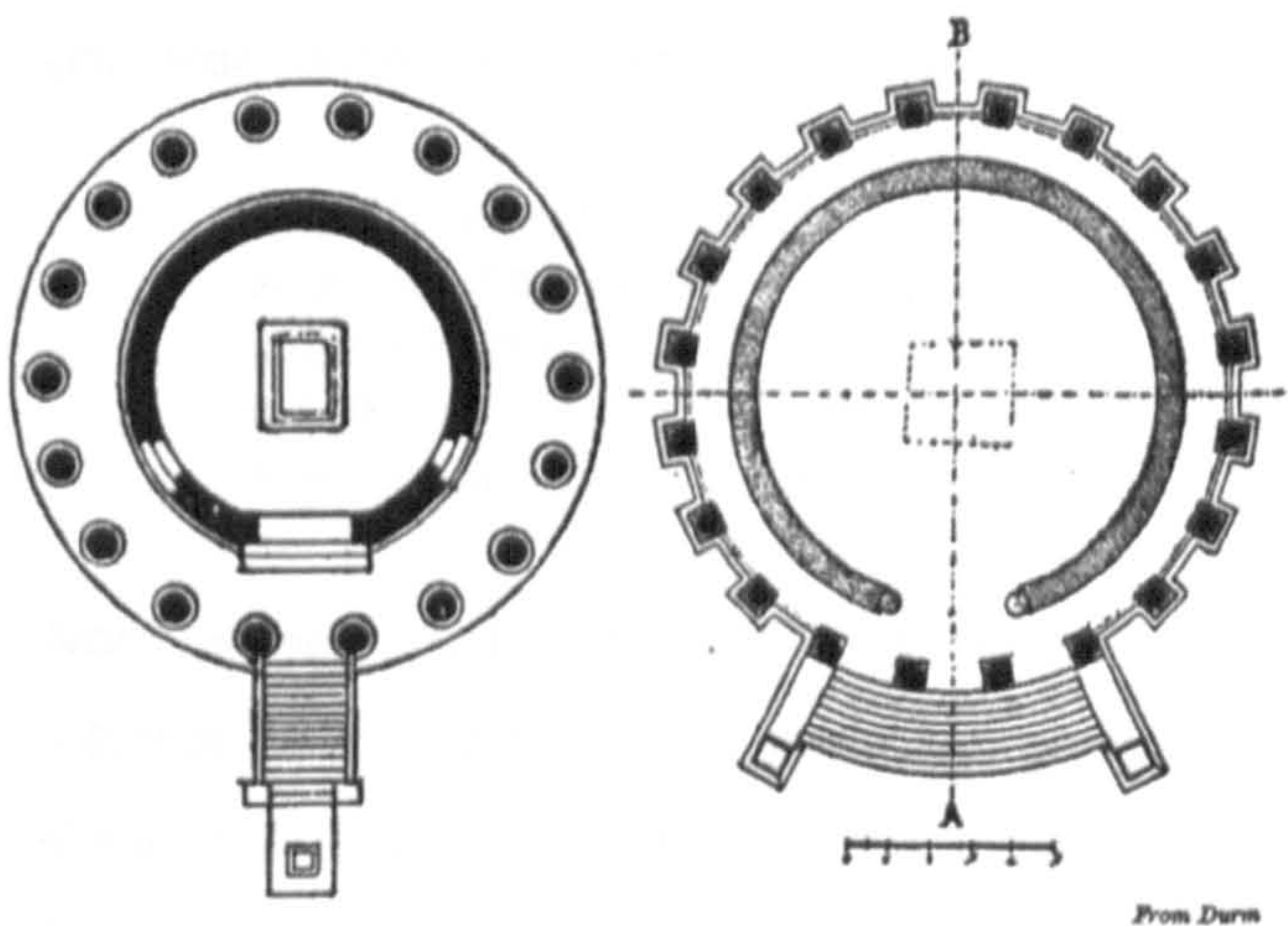


Figure 1

Plans for the temple at Tivoli and the temple of Vesta at Rome from Vitruvius Pollio, *Architectura libri decem* (Lyons, 1523) Book IV Chapter III

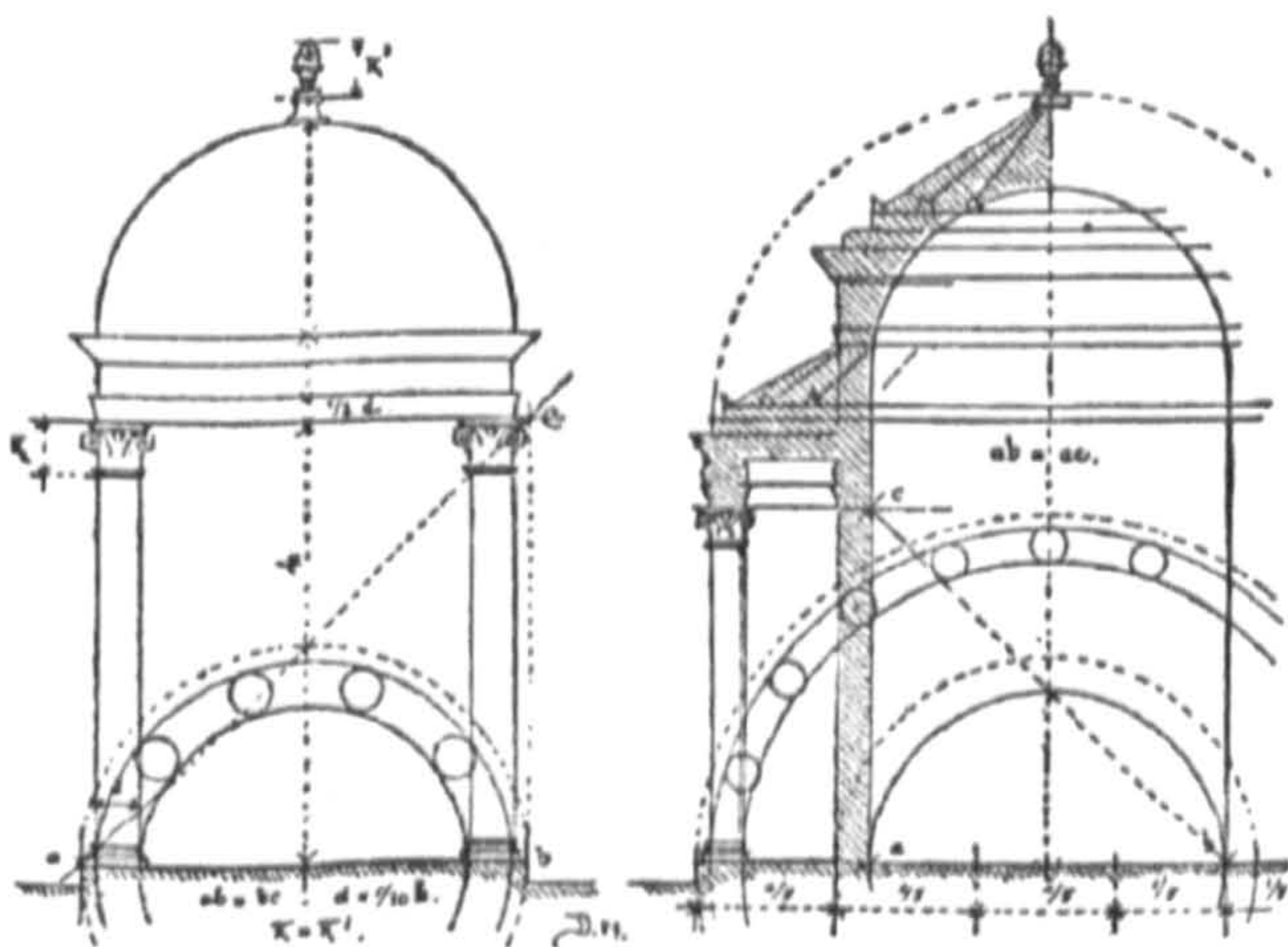


Figure 2

Elevations of a circular Tempietto from Vitruvius Pollio, *Architectura libri decem* (Lyons, 1523) Book IV Chapter III

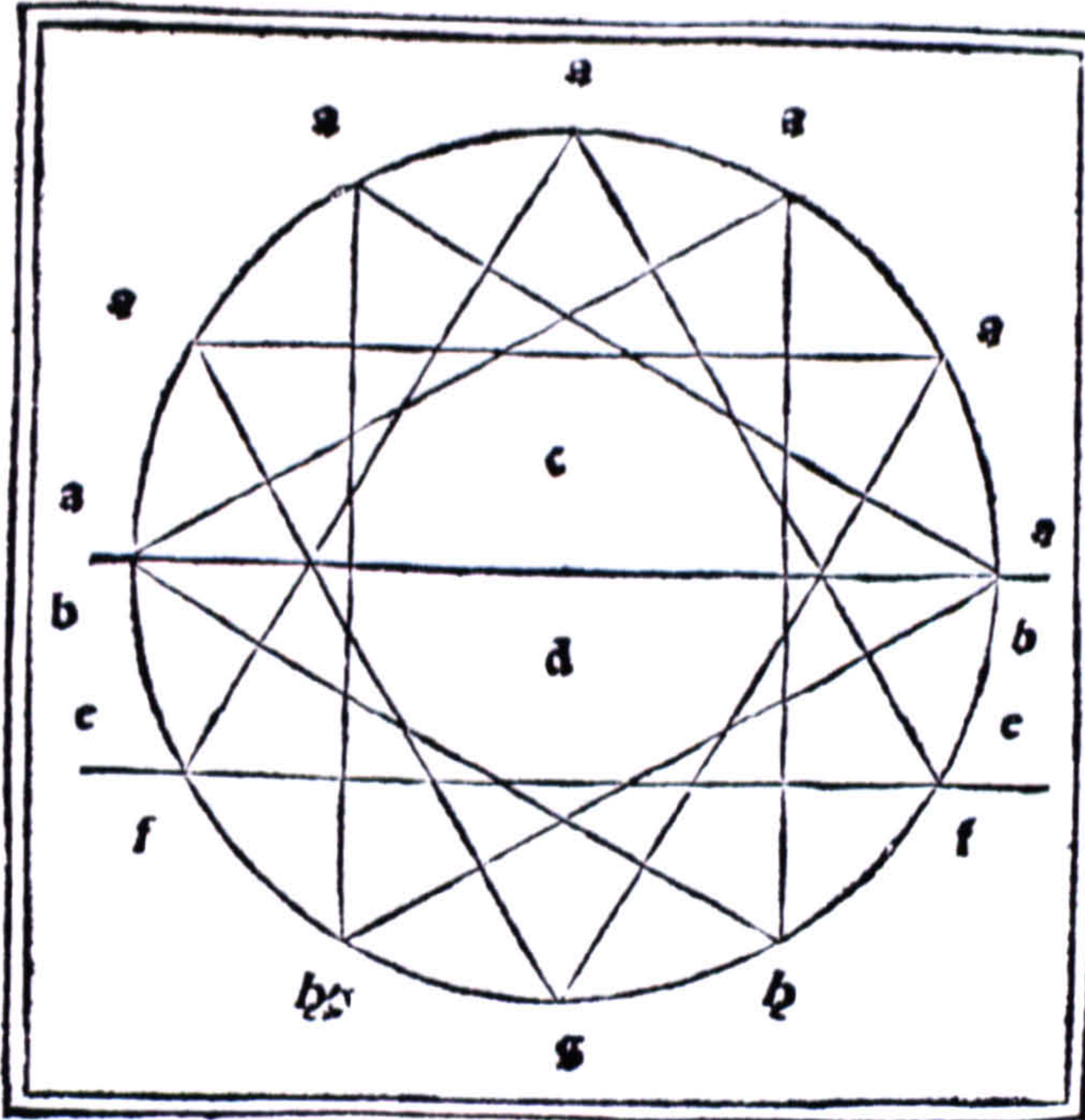


Figure 3

Architectural Circle for a theatre, showing geometric lines which delineate a range of polygonal structures from Vitruvius Pollio, *Architectura libri decem* (Lyons, 1523) Book IV Chapter III

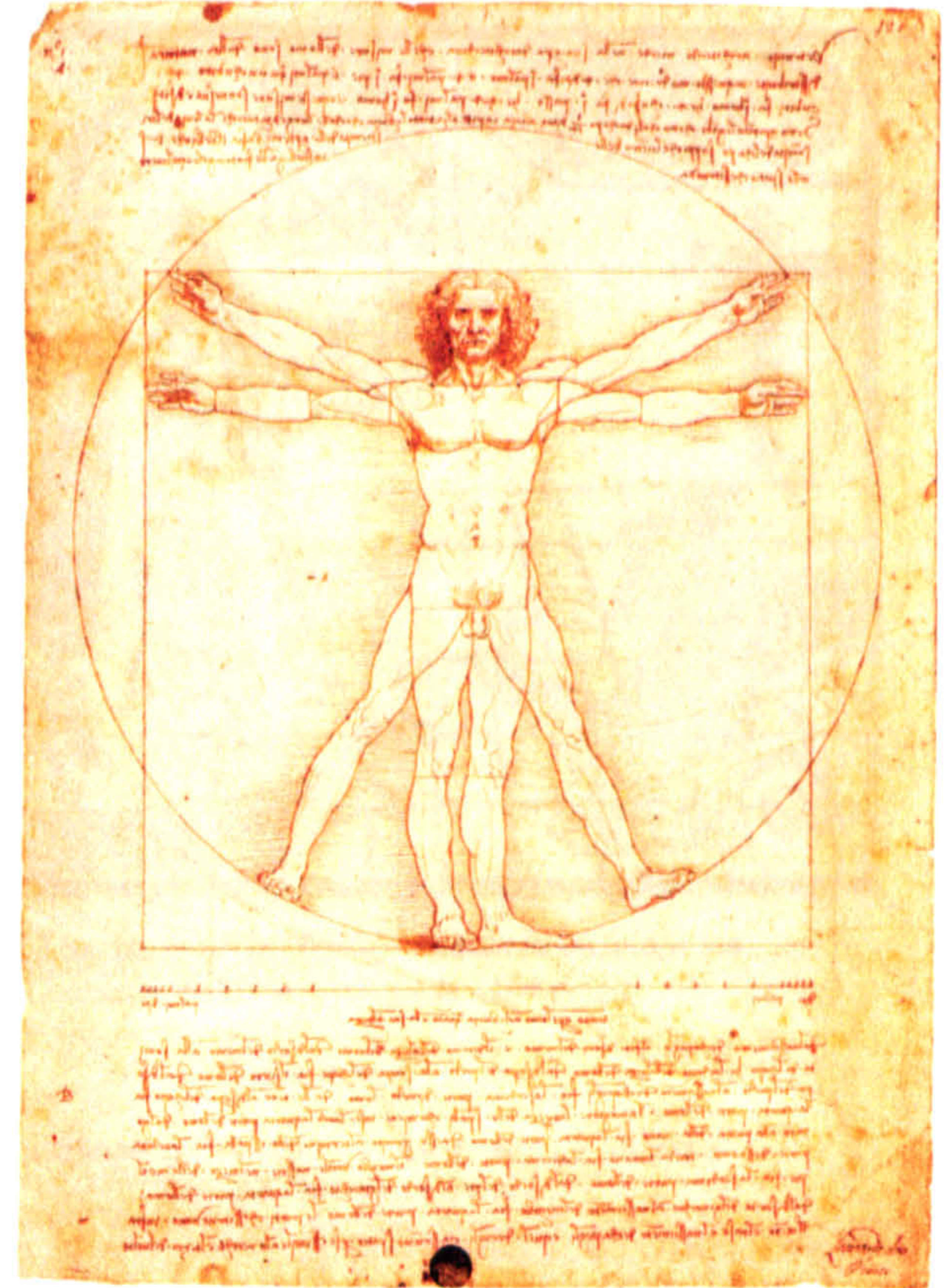


Figure 4

Leonardo da Vinci, Study of Human Proportion in the Manner of Vitruvius. circa. 1490. Gallerie dell' Accademia, Venice.

the archetypal Neo-Platonist attempt to unify classical proportion with Christianity: the Vitruvian circle (fig. 3). Architectural measurements for early *theatrum anatomicorum* are thus similar to those of specific ecclesiastical spaces – and the human form within their design was intended to represent both a religious sacrament and the microcosm of divine creation. Such structures could do little but underline the significance of the body as an image of God's design in the universe. Jonathan Sawday has observed of them that:

The Renaissance anatomical theatre combined elements from a number of different sources, drawing together various different kinds of public space in order to produce an event which was visually spectacular. Thus in the construction of these theatres, we can discern the outlines of the judicial court, the dramatic stage, and, *most strikingly*, the basilica-style church or temple, as shadowy architectural precursors.³⁸

Nonetheless, such humanist symbols could easily be interpreted as evidence of necromantic interest in the body that, far from connecting the act of dissection to accepted theology, distanced it from it. Returning to Vitruvian architectural circles (especially those used in the construction of theatres), one may observe that they have a series of equilateral triangles inscribed upon their axes, following geometric lines (as does the outstretched human figure of Da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man' (see fig. 4 above)) – however, such delineations come as close to representation of the necromancer's circle and pentangle as the they do the ecclesiastical architecture of the *tempietto*. Misappropriation of such potent religious symbols proved central to

the downfall of popular dramatic fictions such as Faustus (see fig. 5) and Ford's own *Mother Sawyer* (perhaps, metaphorically, even *D'Amville*).³⁹ Early Renaissance anatomists therefore clearly had to be as careful in defining the architectural style and ornament of their operational environments as they were in creating their linguistic discourses. Even when they seized upon the tangible value of linking the location of their activities to the sites of conventional religious ceremony, they also trod a dangerous path. It was safer for them to continue to undertake their work if they repeatedly articulated a Christian

desire to make manifest God's creation in the body of man in everything they did. In the mid-sixteenth century, a fine line existed between the appropriation of ecclesiastical architecture and the interpretation of such symbols as heretical, even necromantic, interest in the body. Adherence to Christian architecture was accordingly never merely *implied*, it was repeatedly stressed and underscored; any connections to the theatrical were downplayed.



Printed at London for Iohn Wright, and are to be sold at his shop without Newgate, 1624.

Figure 5

Frontispiece to Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* from the Quarto of 1624.

VIII

With regards to the need to couch anatomical science in religious terms 'New Scientists' were more fortunate than those of the early Vesalian school by far. By the sixteen-twenties, a near century of anatomical investigation had begun to be accepted as a scientific and cultural *fact*. Such careful architectural measures no longer needed to be taken in order to pre-empt accusations of theological or ecclesiastical transgression. Anatomy hall design – and certainly that of England and Holland – accordingly became based more upon the simple need to ensure that as many people as possible could see what was happening. This fact may clearly be demonstrated by contrasting the title page of the 1543 or 1555 *fabrica*, showing the anatomy theatre in Padua (fig. 6, over), with the 1609 and 1610 views of the Leiden anatomy theatre (figs. 7 & 8 on the following page). In the Paduan image, the sacrifice of adopting the basilica like layout is that the room is appears to be cramped; the spectacle is obscured and it is clear that a large part of the audience has problems in witnessing the demonstration. In the Protestant city of Leiden, however, the more ergonomic design seems less concerned with paying lip service to religious significance – and therefore provides excellent sight-lines for all present.⁴⁰



Figure 6

Title-page to the second edition of Andreas Vesalius' *De Corporis humani fabrica* (Basel, 1555)
The layout is cramped due to the tempetto style architecture

In Cartesian philosophy, the body was to be separated from the soul. In Harvean science, it would begin to be separated from the microcosmic map into its constituent parts for biological as opposed to religious purposes.⁴¹ The architecture of anatomical auditoria in Protestant northern Europe from the turn of the seventeenth century onwards therefore reflects this decline in religious significance: because the anatomist's operational environment no longer repeatedly needed to stress his religious intent, the newer anatomy theatres of England and Holland no longer resembled the basilica church of the *fabrica* frontispiece. At the same time, in England, dramatists were enjoying a brief respite from attack due to the intervention of a monarch who evidently valued the theatre more highly than the previous one had done – and were therefore becoming much more adventurous with their subject matter, scenery and staging (both at Court and in their Private Theatres). The link between new *theatrum anatomicorum* and theatre architecture slowly begins to emerge.

This development of modern English anatomy hall architecture alongside the rise of new Private Theatres is vital to my present argument. A deliberate move in the design of new *theatrum anatomicorum* away from religious significance towards a concern with the practicalities and

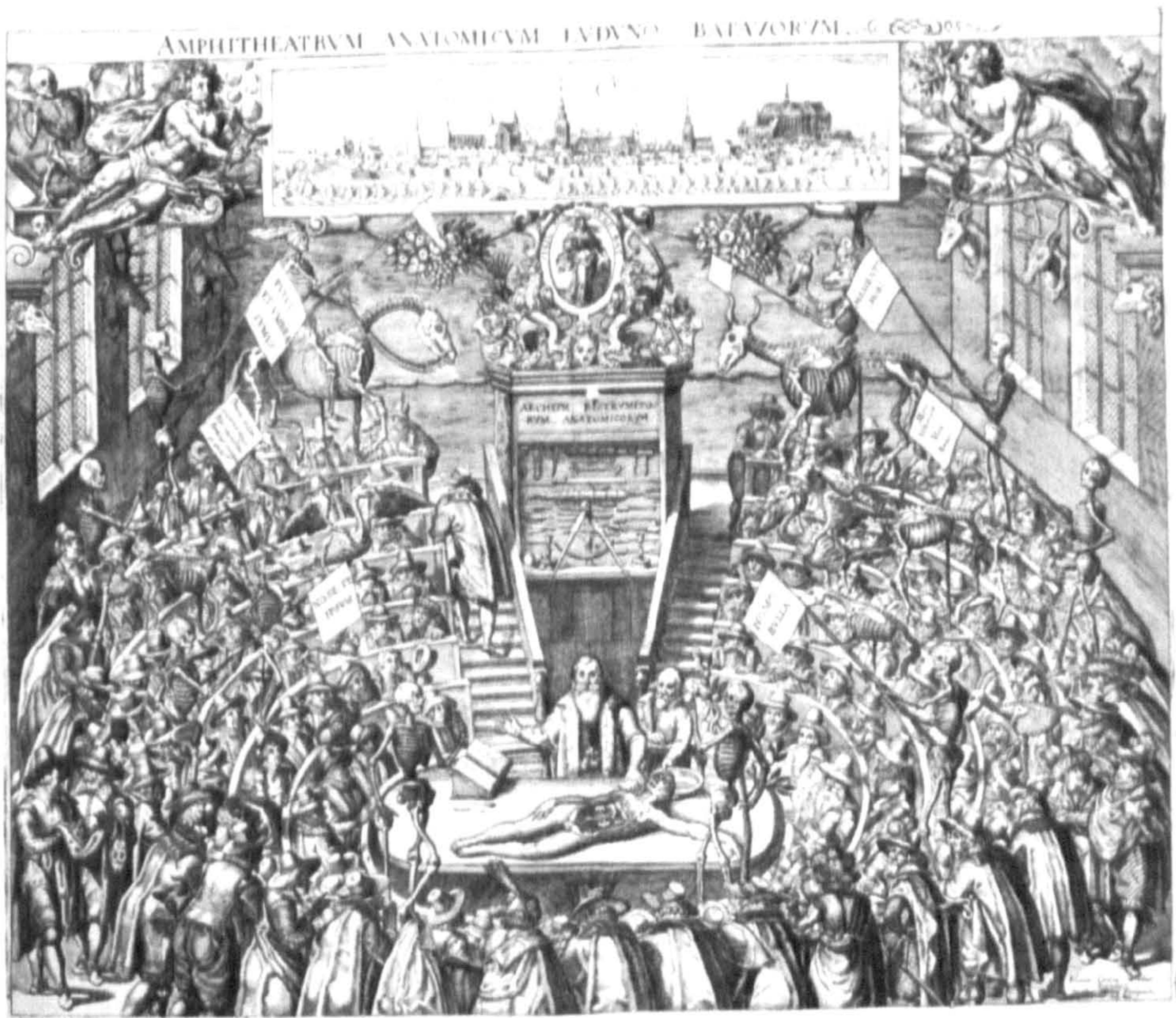


Figure 7

Anonymous Engraving of an anatomy taking place at the Leiden Anatomy Theatre (1609) after a drawing by J. C. van't Woudt (Woudanus).

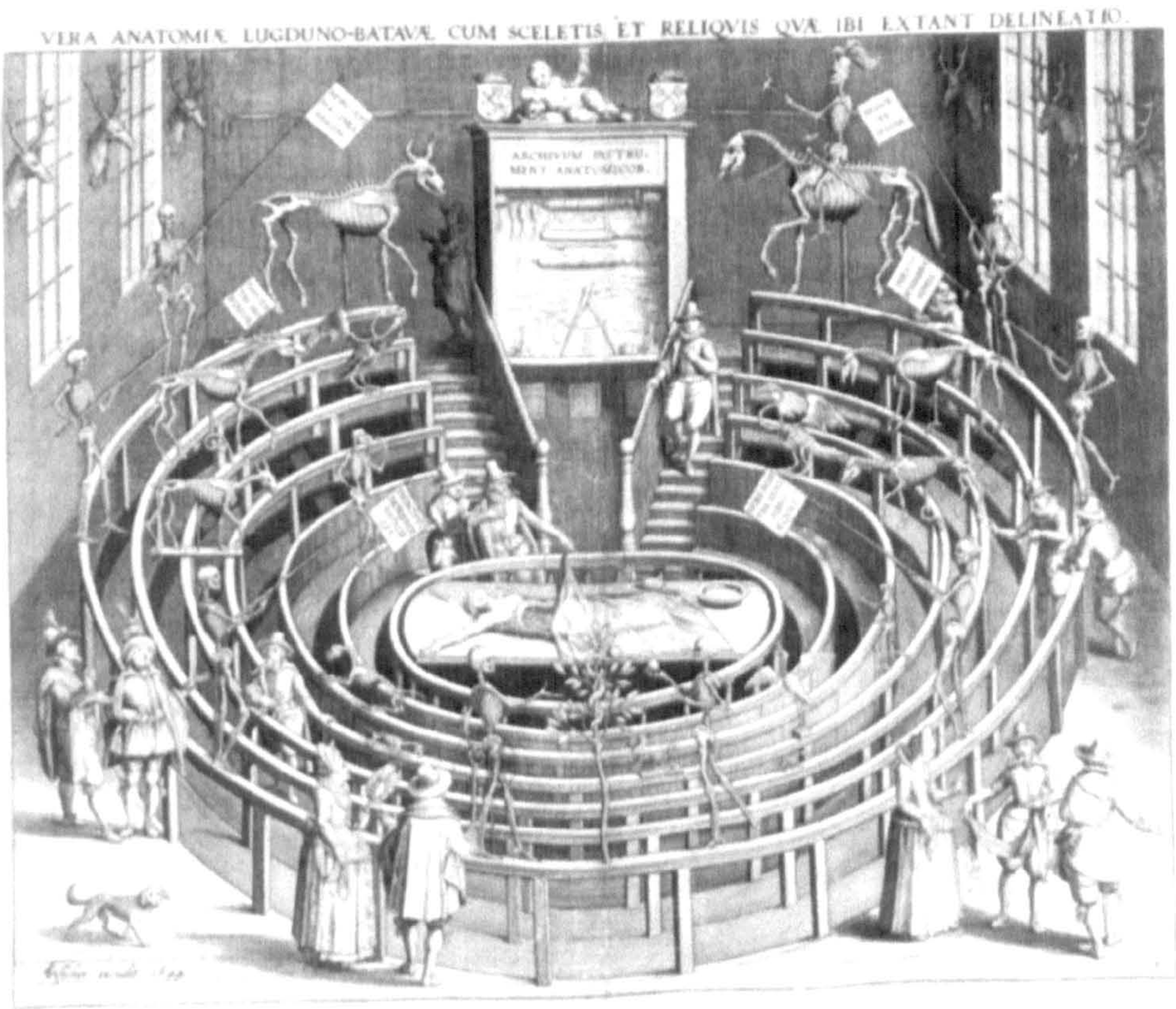


Figure 8

View of the Leiden Anatomy Theatre circa 1610.
Provenance: Leiden University Library.

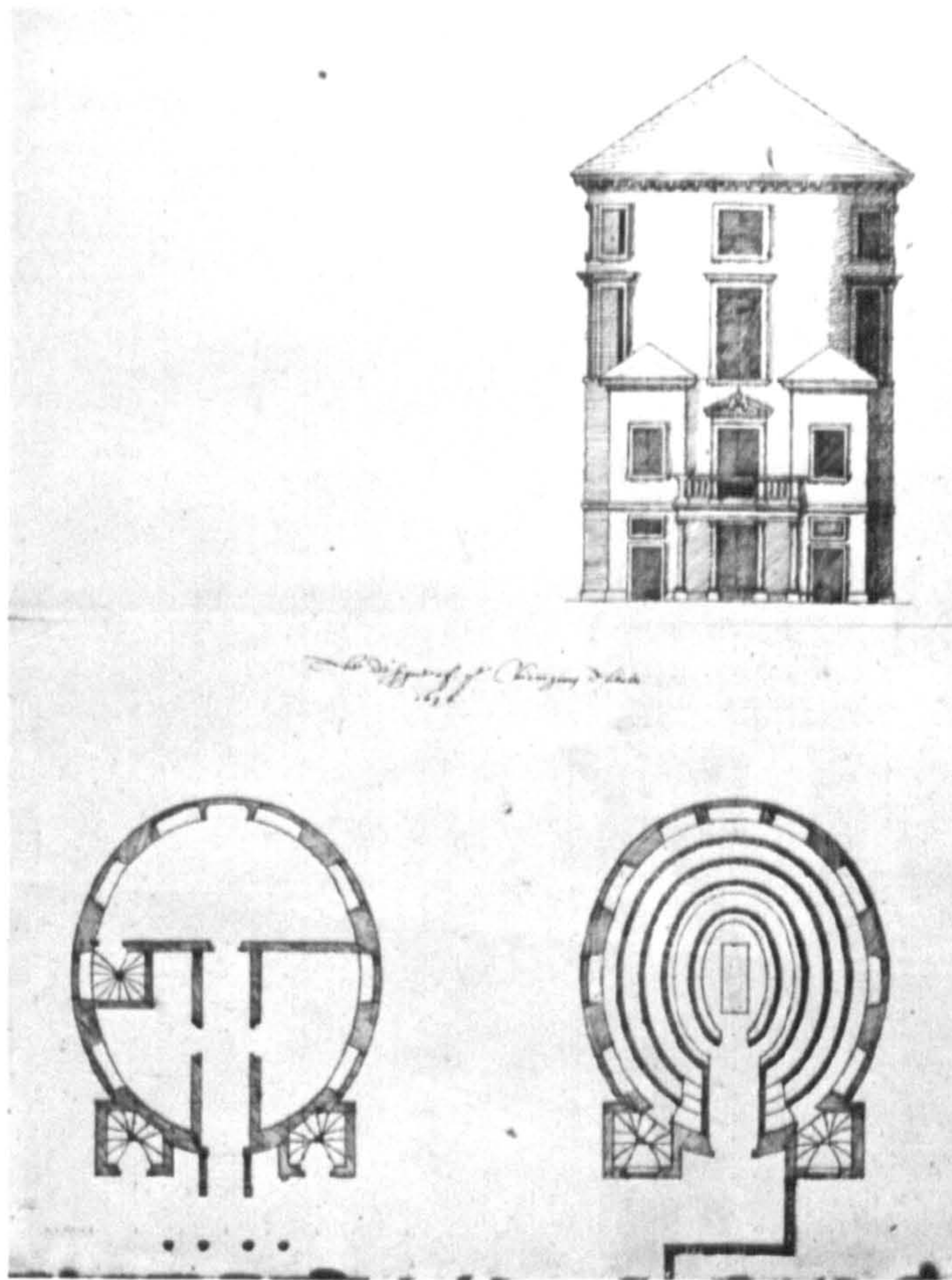


Figure 9

Plans and Elevation of Inigo Jones' design for the Barber Surgeons' Anatomy Theatre (1636)
provenance: Worcester College, Oxford.

mechanics of making one type of rehearsed and increasingly lay spectacle clear to a large number of people brought the two architectural forms together.⁴² It was the shared *secular* intimacy of both enclosed and elitist environments that made Ford's anatomical presentations possible. Drawing on architectural precedents for dramatic theatres (rather than the anthropocentric design of Italian Renaissance churches) English physicians' companies during the sixteen twenties and thirties utilised the skills of theatre designers (most notably Inigo Jones) in the construction of their new auditoria. Vitruvian theatre design from the fifth book of *The Ten Books of Architecture* and Serlian design from the first, second and third books of *de architettura*⁴³ are more clearly the model for Jones' Barber Surgeon's Hall (see figs. 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 to the left and over, and also the CD ROM) than the designs for Renaissance churches that had inspired earlier European *theatrum anatomicorum*.

The specific importance of Jones' anatomy theatre design to my argument will be made in detail below, yet links to theatre architecture, even within the early basilica form, and certainly in anatomy theatres such as those in London and Leiden, are obvious – Charles O'Malley has even pointed to an element of theatricality in the representation of the anatomy theatre on the title page of the *fabrica* – in which he finds reference to the woodcuts of theatre architecture that are found in contemporaneous editions of the dramatic works of Terence published in 1497 and Plautus in 1511 (see fig. 14 on page 198).⁴⁴

The general similarity between later anatomy halls and dramatic theatres has several facets that can be summarised as follows:

- (i) Like theatres, these structures placed their performers, in this instance a cadaver and an anatomist, on a raised platform surrounded with spectators (as theatres did their actors)

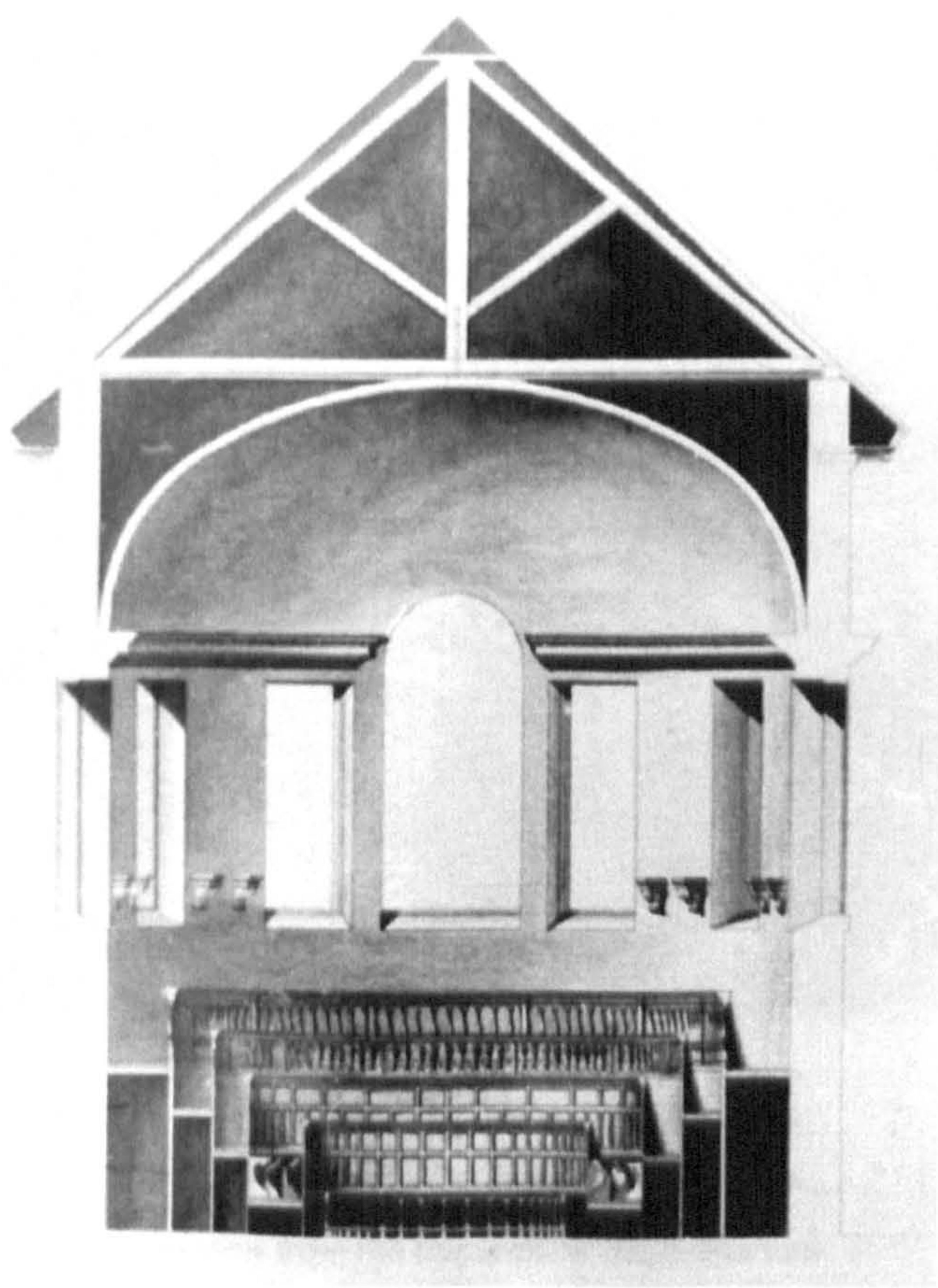


Figure 10

Cross Section of Inigo Jones's Barbers Surgeon's Hall
Provenance: London, Guildhall Library

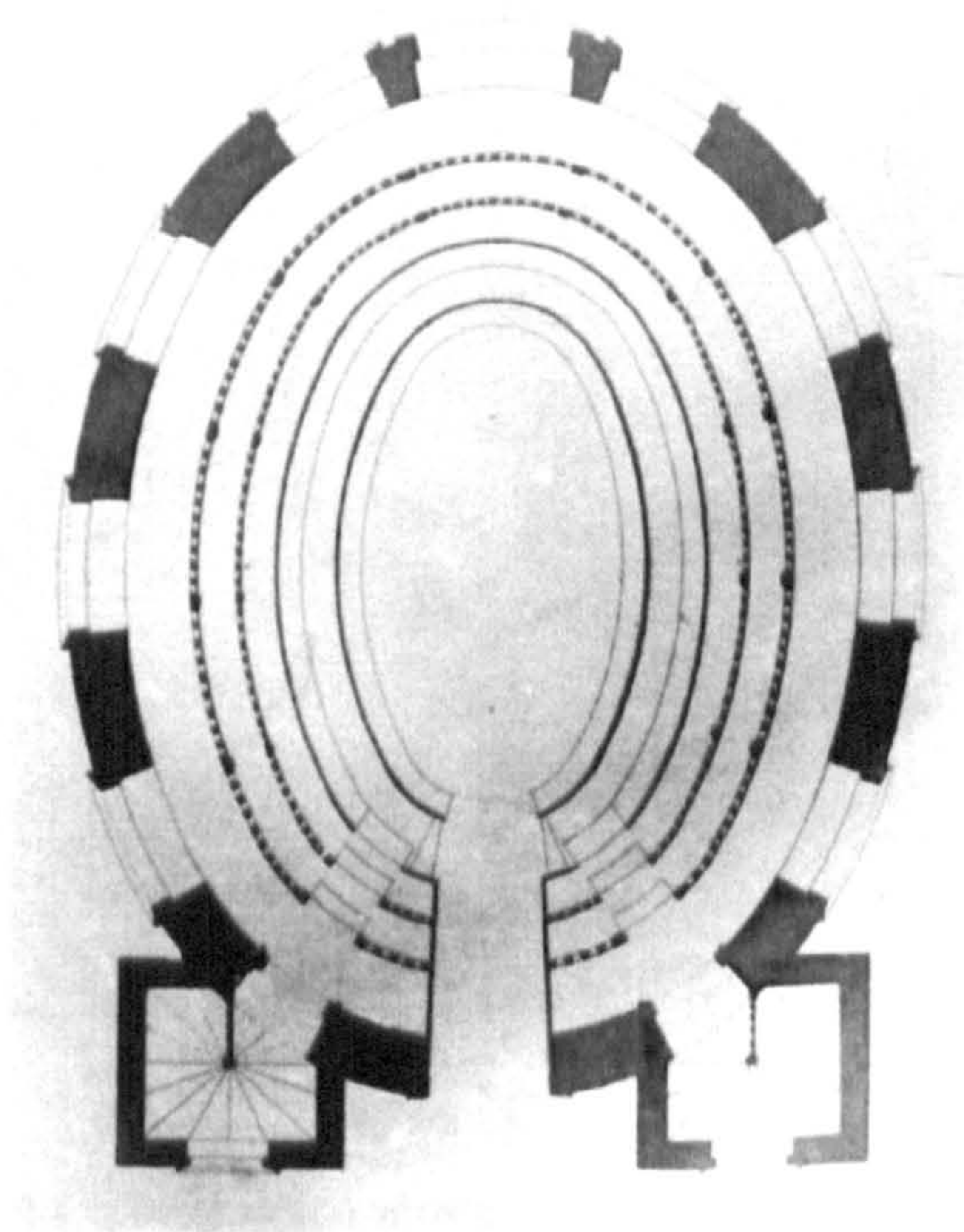


Figure 11

Plan of Inigo Jones's Barber Surgeon's Hall
Provenance: London Guildhall Library

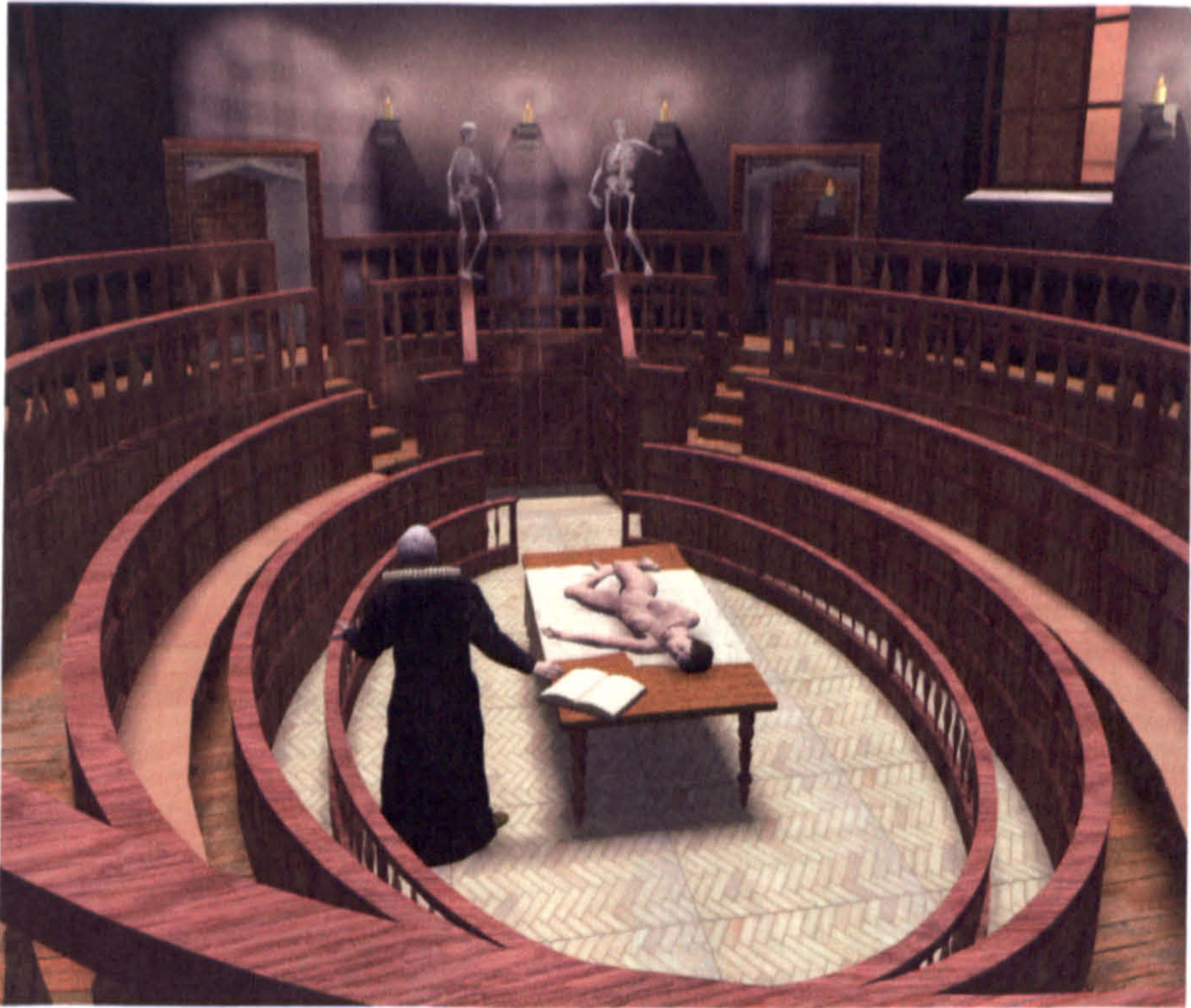


Figure 12

Digital Reconstruction of Inigo Jones' design for the Barber Surgeons' Anatomy Theatre (1636)
Showing the view from the third row of the auditorium

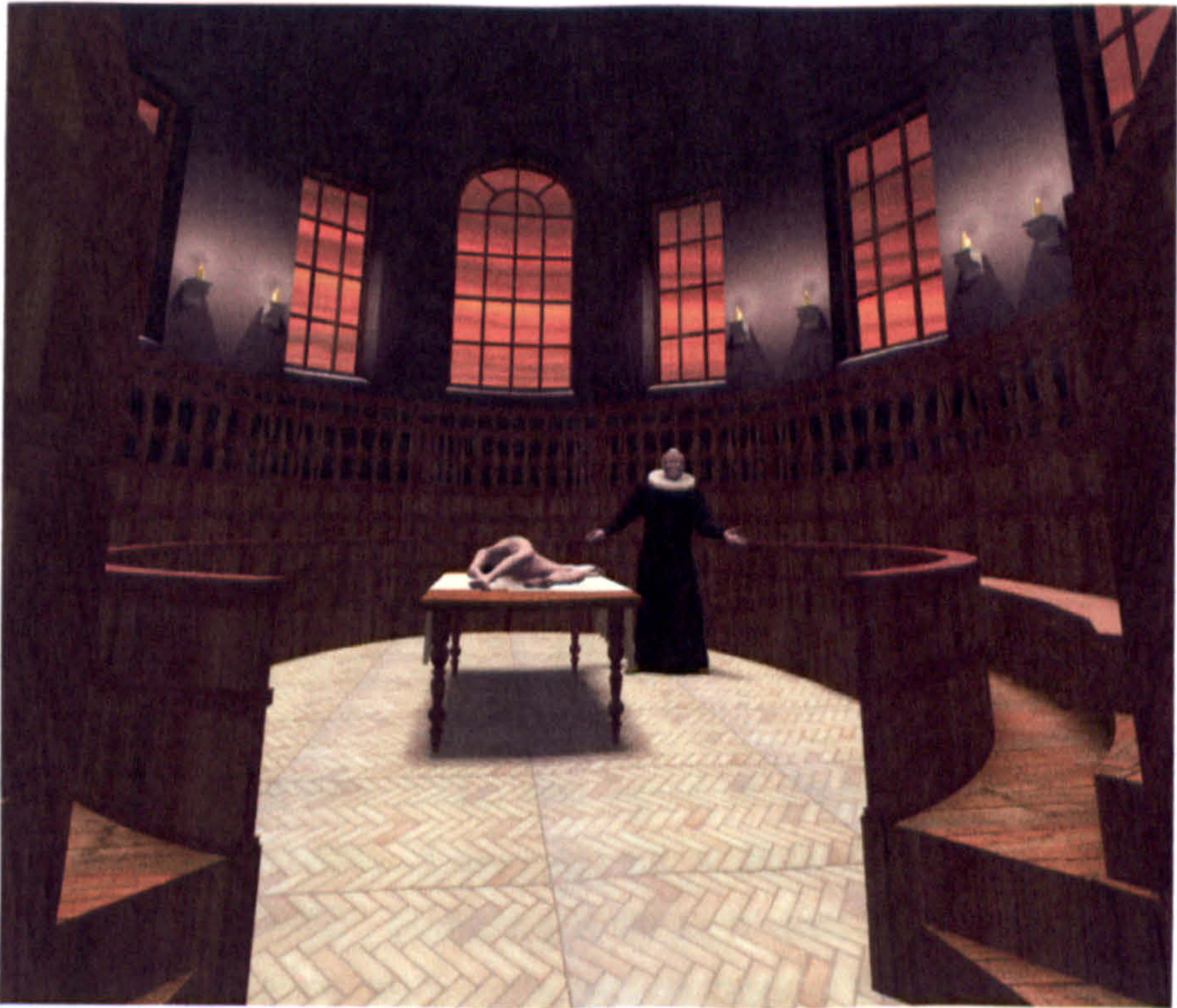


Figure 13

Digital Reconstruction of Inigo Jones' design for the Barber Surgeons' Anatomy Theatre (1636)
Showing the view from the anatomist's entranceway

- (ii) Anatomy theatres had a degree of scenic decoration that had a symbolic link to the activity taking place within them (as Private Theatre stages increasingly had)
- (iii) The seating of spectators in proximity to the 'action' was dependent upon their social status
- (iv) The spectacle of (and commentary upon) anatomical demonstration was guided by the 'script' of a published anatomy (as actors were by their lines)
- (v) Dissections served to circumscribe and reinforce the symbolic power of a ruling class through physical punishment of a known transgressor of the moral order – as is the case in the plots of most early modern drama. (Until the Anatomy Act was passed in 1832 the corpses on which dissections were undertaken were *uniquely* those of executed felons and anatomy was, therefore, obvious further punishment for the crimes of their lifetime).⁴⁵

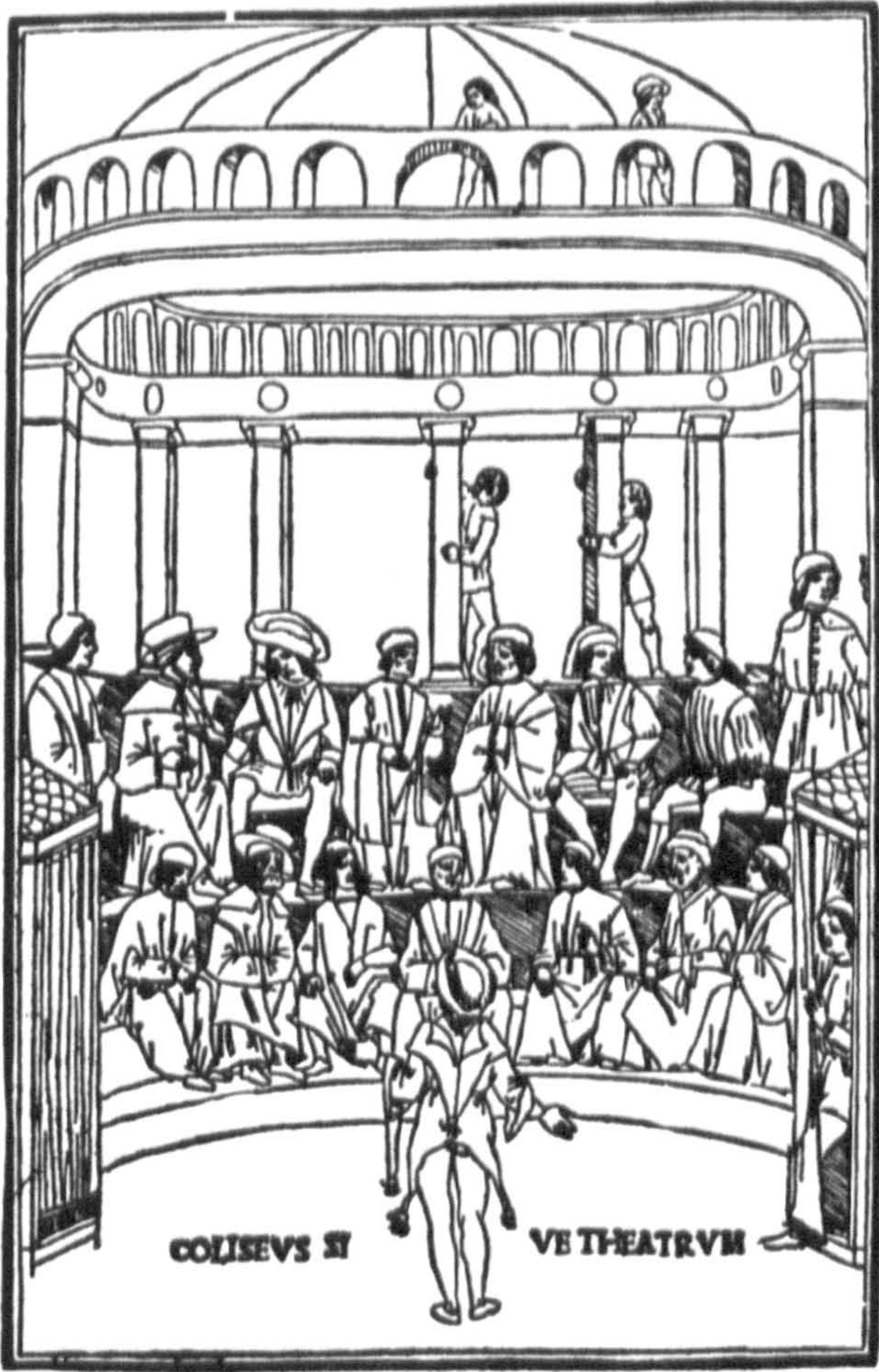


Figure 14

Title page for the writings of Plautus
(Venice, 1511)

Such general similarities may be said to hold for all Renaissance theatres, yet as we shall see, they have a more profound effect on our understanding of Ford's Phoenix plays than they do on the work of dramatists operating in earlier theatrical spaces. The reason behind this is one couched in a series of coincidences and architectural details. To fully understand it, my enquiry must now move to examination of an entirely different architectural space.

IX

Illustrative evidence about the size, shape and layout of early modern cockpits concurs with contemporary eye witness accounts. It provides for a general model of a circular structure, approximately forty feet in diameter, containing a series of concentric tiered seats (often with an ambulatory platform around the exterior) and a circular table at the centre covered with straw or rush matting upon which the cocks fought.⁴⁶ The journal of Thomas Platter, a young traveller from Basle who visited London between 18th September and 20th October of 1599, gives a description of a visit to a cockpit that reveals a clear mental connection between such a cockpit and anatomy theatre architecture:

I saw the place which is built like a theatre (*theatrum*). In the centre of the floor stands a circular table covered with straw and with ledges around it, where the cocks are teased and inticed to fly at one another, while those with wagers as to which cock will win, sit closest around the circular disk, but the spectators who are merely present on their entrance penny sit around higher up.⁴⁷

The account confirms a circular structure, a raised central table, and provides evidence that a spectator's position, within the tiered rings of seating, was subject to his financial commitment (here, as in Private Theatres, those spending more – in this case by placing wagers – were located nearest the action; and we also know that position nearest the centre in anatomy theatres was dependent on wealth and status).⁴⁸ What is slightly ambiguous in Platter's account, however, is his parenthetical use of the Latin term *theatrum* that follows the vernacular 'theatre'. Did Platter wish to differentiate between the English public stages that he had described on previous pages of his journal (structures for which he did *not* employ the term *theatrum*) and a different type of theatre for which the Latin term would have been more applicable?

An answer to this question is provided in Zacharias Von Uffenbach's subsequent provision of another cockpit description (this time the one near 'Gras [Gray's] Inn'):

The building is round like a tower, and inside it resembles a '*theatrum anatomicum*', for all round it there are benches in tiers, on which the spectators sit. In the middle there is a round table which is covered with mats, on which the cocks have to fight.⁴⁹

Here the complete term *theatrum anatomicum*, which Platter only hinted at, is employed. The immediate association that both men therefore seem to have made when presented with a circular cockpit table surrounded by tiered rings of seats was with the early modern anatomy theatre – and Von Uffenbach could have had little doubt as to the similarity between the two structures since he had visited the anatomy theatre of the Royal College of Physicians (that was also located within a tower) and described its layout in a journal entry made earlier *that same day*.⁵⁰

Turning once again to surviving visual representations allows us to notice the similarities between these two structures for ourselves. Figure 15 (over) shows the frontispiece to R[obert] H[owlett]'s 1709 pamphlet *The Royal Pastime of Cock-Fighting*. At the top in the centre a banner bears the book's title; pictured below is a circular room shown from a point of view opposite its central door – from which three windows curve along a wall along either side. At the centre of the room is a raised circular dais on which two cocks fight. Surrounding this focal point are four concentric tiered circles of seating in which men – mainly wearing hats – are seated to observe the spectacle. Behind the last row of seats is an ambulatory, circled by a balustrade in which there are two gaps, one at the bottom the other at the top, allowing for entrance to and exit from the galleries.

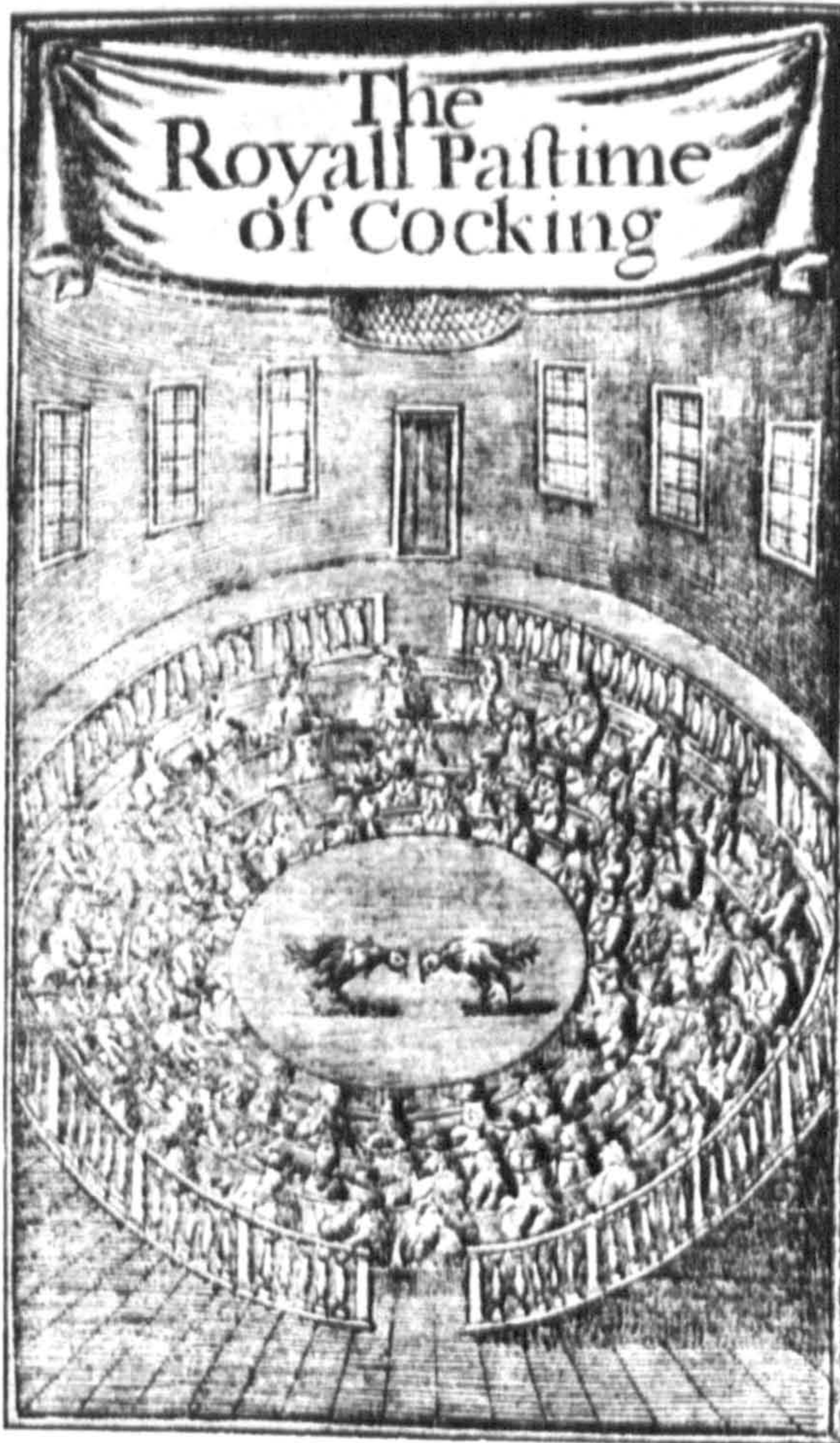


Figure 15

Frontispiece to R[obert] H[owlett]'s *The Royal Pastime of Cockfighting* (London, 1709)

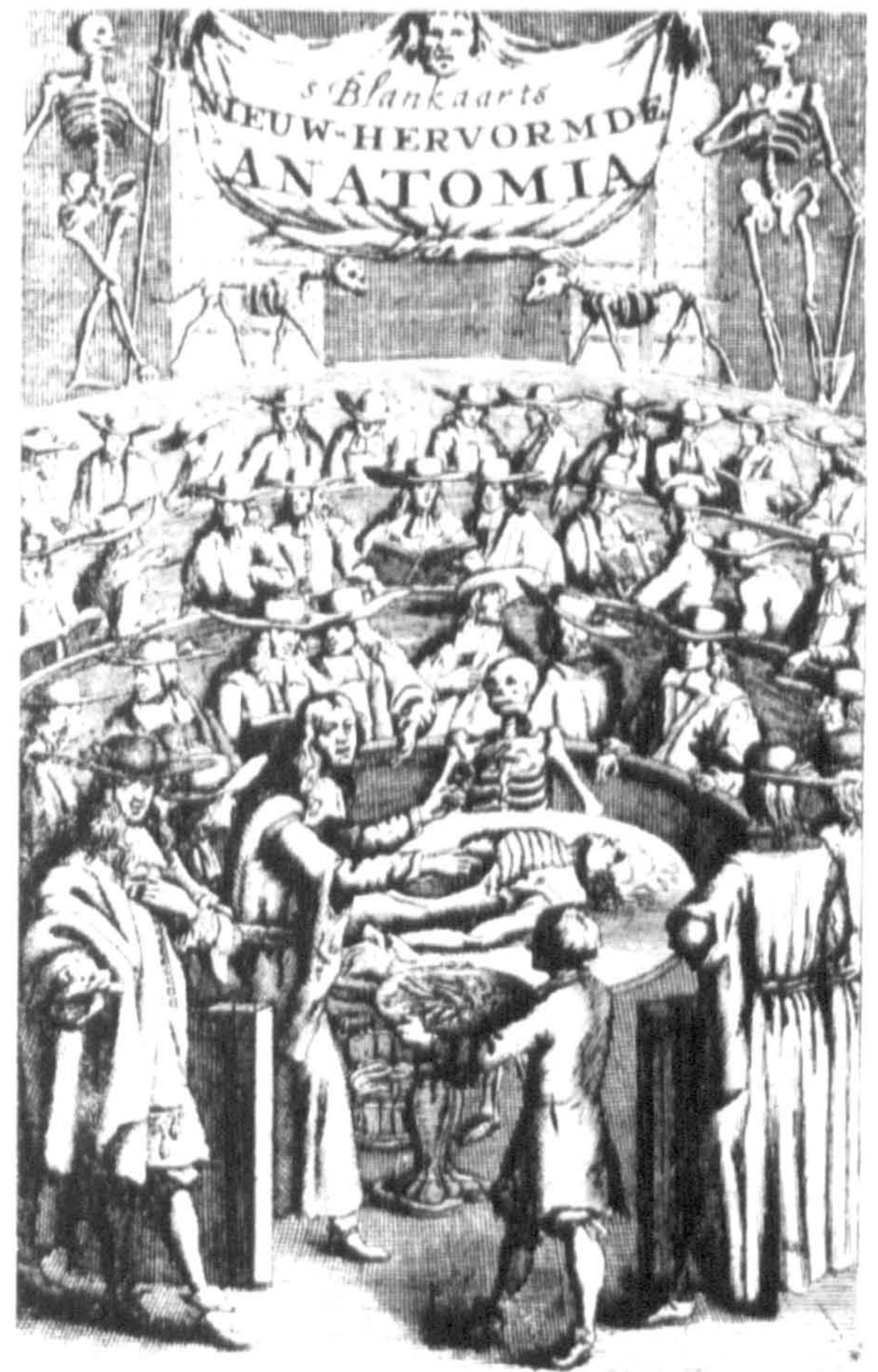


Figure 16

Anatomical Demonstration from anonymous engraving for the frontispiece to Steven Blankaart, *Nieuw-hervormde anatomia* (Amsterdam, 1678)

Looking at the representation of a Dutch anatomy lesson in Figure 16 (or returning to Figures 7 & 8, the Anatomy Theatre at Leiden University) we see almost identical structures. In Leiden (see especially figure 7), a plaque depicting the town floats atop in the centre; pictured below is a cabinet containing the tools of dissection; on either side two stairways allow access to and egress from the galleries. Beyond these, curving to either side, are two windows; in the centre at the bottom is a raised dais upon which lie a semi-dissected corpse, an open book, two instruments of dissection and a bowl. Behind these objects stands the anatomist, still located within the central 'stage' area. Rising around both this man and his subject are five rows of tiered seats, occupied by men – mainly wearing hats – who observe the spectacle. Above the seating is an ambulatory on which more audience stand leaning upon a balustrade. The balustrade has a gap at the top which allows for entry to and exit from the seating. The diagram in *nieuw-hervormde anatomia* is almost identical – only this time the furnishings are set within what appears to be a circular room-structure. Such visual parallels are so startling that there is little doubt as to the meaning of early modern eye witness accounts that describe London cockpits as *theatrum* or *theatrum anatomicorum*. The layout of the circular furnishings in the Leiden anatomy theatre (even set as they are within a rectangular hall) and the engraving depicting the circular Amsterdam anatomy

hall match the London cockpit of Howlett's frontispiece almost exactly and – as we now know – the circular furnishings of Leiden's anatomy theatre were not unique. Moreover, what makes the argument that English cockpits and anatomy theatres shared the same design features all the more convincing is that the surviving written accounts of London *theatrum anatomicorum* also show them all to be circular or elliptical in internal (and probably external) structure. The *New View of London* comments on the restored Barber Surgeons Hall that:

The Theatre is commodiously fitted out with four degrees of Cedar Seats one above another in elliptical form [...] the roof of this Theatre is an Elliptical Cupulo.⁵¹

and of the anatomy theatre at the Royal College of Physicians:

The theatre under the Cupulo over the Entrance next the street is furnished with 6 degrees of Circular Wainscot Seats one above another, where the anatomy lectures are performed, here being in the Pitt a Table, also 3 Seats for the President, one for the Operator, and the 3d for the Lecturer. Also in the Preparing Room are 13 tables of the Muscles in a Humane body.⁵²

X

As I have hinted at above, the last link in the architectural chain that links John Ford to the anatomy theatres described above takes the form of coincidence. In the last quarter of 1616 an erstwhile actor of the Chamberlain's Men, the King's Men and the Red Bull Company (and the man who was to become London's leading theatre impresario in the years leading up to the Civil War) leased a portion of land on Drury Lane from a somewhat lesser speculator in the entertainment industry. The man giving over the land was John Best. Seven years previously, Best had financed construction of a regular circular amphitheatre on his terrain – at which the public had paid the standard admission price of one penny, had sat in tiered galleries rising around a central circular table and observed the spectacle provided by cocks fighting.⁵³ The actor-manager who took over Best's site was Christopher Beeston and his acquisition sprang from financial aspirations far more ambitious than the organisation of cock-fights. Beeston's plan was to enlarge the circular structure of the Best's cockpit auditorium and to convert it into an enclosed Private Theatre similar to the second Blackfriars Playhouse (the exclusive venue of the King's Men that commanded higher admission prices for its performances than any previous London venue, and that had itself been converted from an existing structure – the Upper Frater Hall of the Blackfriars monastery precinct – by James Burbage in 1596; the theatre was used by boy players until it reverted back to the Burbage family, and hence the King's men, in 1608).⁵⁴

Beeston's accounting was simple: the increased seating capacity concomitant with conversion and expansion of Best's cockpit into a Serlian hall theatre – together with the increase in what could be charged as admission prices – made the venture potentially extremely lucrative (his new venue could charge upwards of *six hundred per-cent* of the prices at either Best's old

cockpit, or Beeston's current public theatre home, the Red Bull). Nevertheless, the implications of Beeston's acquisition of a cockpit (that, in adherence to the general model for such structures, was circular and approximately 40 ft in diameter) as opposed to Burbage's earlier acquisition of a rectangular 110 ft gabled hall has deep resonances for my current enquiry – and the significance of a cockpit antecedent to Beeston's 'Cockpit' theatre (that was almost immediately re-named the Phoenix after its 'rise from the ashes' of the Shrove Tuesday Riots of 1617)⁵⁵ will be realised once the anatomy-theatre-like structure of Best's original cockpit is set against the architectural constraints that were placed upon structural conversions by the extremely restrictive planning ordinances of mid-Jacobean London.

Beeston undertook his Cockpit project during the strictest period of architectural regulation to have been prescribed by the Jacobean monarchy. On his succession to the throne in 1603, James had inherited a series of Elizabethan proclamations that were intended to regulate the practices of the capital's construction industry. The first *tranche* of this building legislation sprang, principally, from a fear of overcrowding in the suburbs (that had augmented the ferocity of plague earlier that year). However, the new monarch also had a clear personal desire to shape the architectural development of his capital and to join trade and the City harmoniously with the Court and Whitehall. Twelve years later (in a proclamation of July 16th 1615, the year preceding Beeston's Cockpit acquisition), James therefore laid down a manifesto of political and architectural intent as he declaimed:

as it was said of the first emperor of Rome, that he had found the city of Rome of brick and left it of marble, so Wee whom God hath honoured to be the first of Britaine, might be able to say in same proportion, that we had found our Citie and suburbs of London of stickes, and left them of brick [...]⁵⁶

Another speech to the Star Chamber (on June 20th 1616) likewise praised the paving of Smithfield, the planting of Moorfields, the new 'Streame', the Pest House, Sutton's Hospital (the Charterhouse), Britain's Burse, the re-edifying of Aldgate and the Building of Hick's Hall. Such public articulations clearly demonstrate both the monarch's active interest in town planning and his civic pride.⁵⁷

The broad thrust of most Jacobean building legislation was two-fold: firstly, it sought to limit the threat of overcrowding that the capital was facing due to its rapid commercial success and subsequent exponential population explosion (and this was principally achieved by making the building of new structures extremely difficult); secondly, it sought to reduce the risks of potentially catastrophic fire by insisting that the primary material of all new construction work was either brick or stone.⁵⁸ James' regulations were, in the main, strictly adhered to (since any new buildings falling foul of the regulations could be – and often were – promptly demolished by the authorities). Builders who flouted the laws were frequently imprisoned or fined.⁵⁹

Given the strictness of this new legal context, Burbage had perhaps been fortunate that his conversion of the Upper Frater Hall had taken place some six years before the new architectural legislation took effect.⁶⁰ In a sense however, the date of Burbage's project is immaterial, since even if conversion of the Blackfriars had been undertaken simultaneously with that of Beeston's Cockpit the former would have posed no risk whatsoever of falling foul of building regulations – because the entire project simply re-furnished the voluminous interior of an existing structure. In Burbage's conversion, only minor structural alterations were made, and the final internal dimensions of the Blackfriars theatre (as outlined by a surviving legal deposition of 1609) were only 66' by 46' (a rectangular structure that was easily accommodated within the existing building's original frame).⁶¹ Twenty years later, however, Beeston – like any London entrepreneur who sought not to refit but rather to demolish or greatly expand an existing structure – found building regulations far more limiting. So why did he take on Best's cockpit at all, given that it was far too small to house his new Private Theatre without extensive rebuilding – and that statutory regulation severely hampered what he could legally do to convert it? Why did he not, like Burbage, take a building with a shell large enough to accommodate a new theatre inside an older structure like a pair of Russian dolls? The answer lies in the excellent *location* of Best's old cockpit site.

Beeston desired Best's Drury Lane site precisely because of its position almost exactly between the Court and the City. In 1616, the opportunity to construct a Private Theatre in the increasingly fashionable area between Covent Garden and Lincoln's Inn fields (see the top right hand corner of the maps over) was scarce. A building with large enough foundations to be converted but that had a pedigree for public entertainment would not have been easy to come by in such a fashionable quarter – and location in an area that was increasingly attracting the new, richer and more upwardly mobile, immigrants to London was paramount to obtaining a regular, large, and well-heeled Private Theatre audience.⁶² Those not living in the immediate vicinity would also have been more likely to travel to a fashionable location such as Drury Lane than to the suburbs or liberties where previous Public Theatres had been located. Beeston's move from the remoteness of the Red Bull (in upper-Clerkenwell) to the centrality of Drury Lane was therefore paramount if his company were to attract the rich patrons for whom being seen at a club-like fashionable location was often as important as observing dramatic spectacle itself. Beeston's players clearly sought to 'upgrade' from Public to Private Theatre company; and the survival of the Cockpit into the heyday of Restoration theatre-land testifies to the excellence of Beeston's choice of Drury Lane as *the* fashionable location between Court and City. The thriving vitality of this part of London in the late Jacobean and Caroline periods has often been noted and may be clearly demonstrated by a simple comparison of maps showing the area in 1603 and 1660 (that evidence the exponential increase of building *specifically* in the areas surrounding Drury Lane).

Practically, though, Beeston could not simply order Best's old cockpit demolished and construct a larger, rectangular, purpose built hall theatre on this attractive site, even if (architecturally and

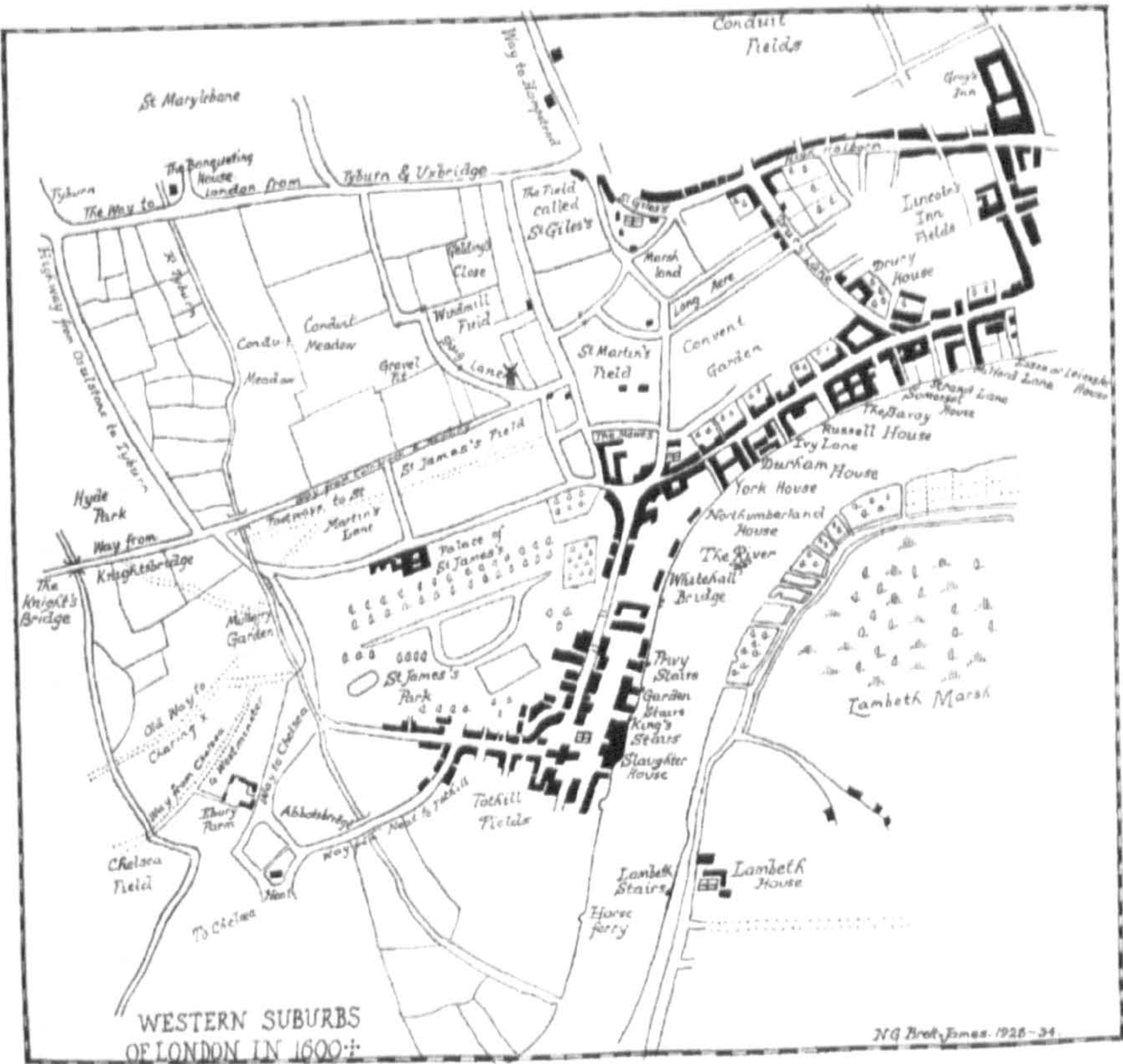


Figure 17

Western Suburbs of London circa. 1600
from Norman Brett-Jones, *The Growth of Stuart London*

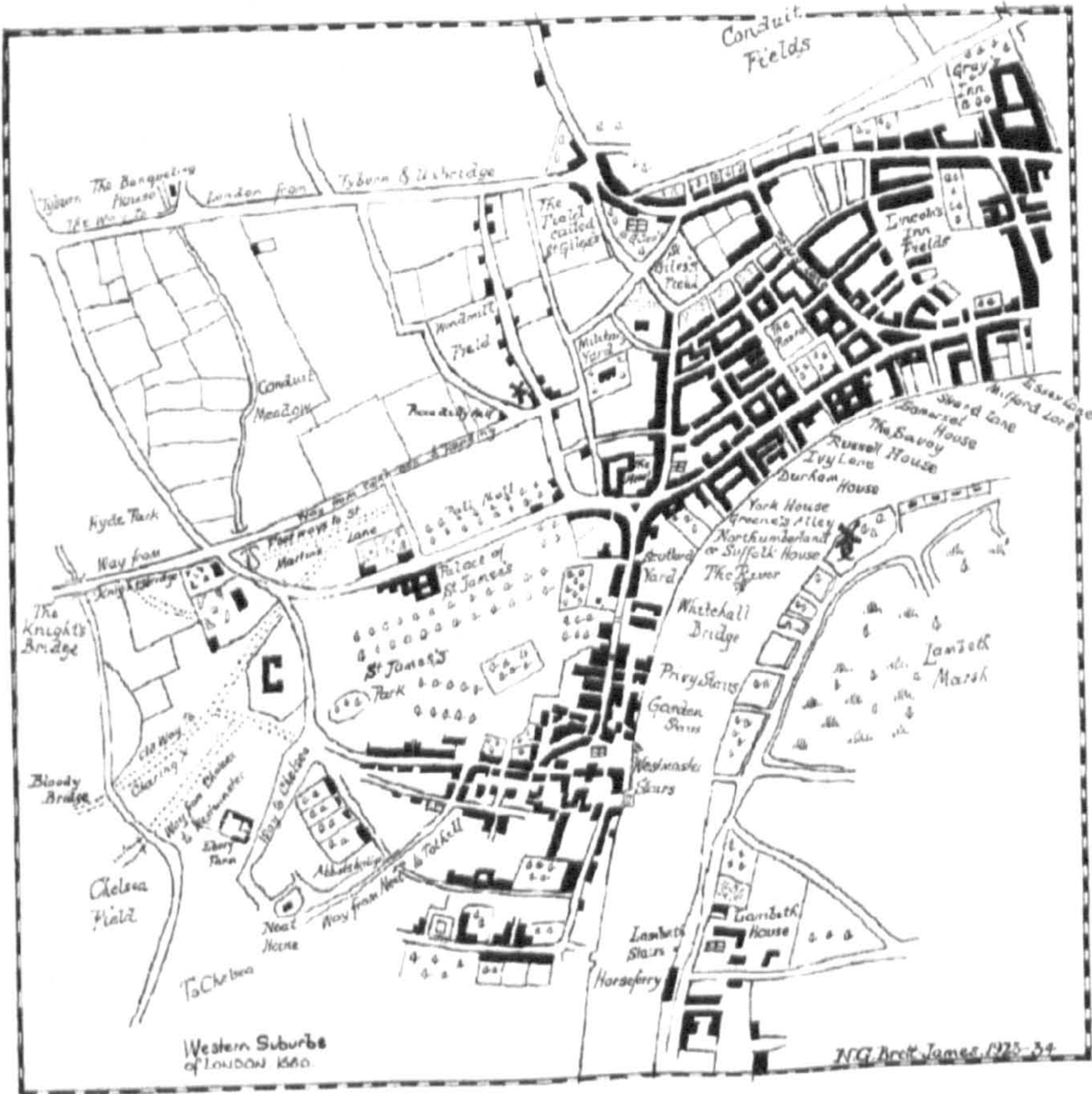


Figure 18

Western Suburbs of London circa. 1660
from Norman Brett-Jones, *The Growth of Stuart London*

economically) the construction of an entirely *new* theatre modelled on classical Serlian principles (such as the rectangular interior of the Blackfriars – or the temporary stages of Court masques) would doubtless have been his preferred intention – and especially given the difference in kudos between a swanky, newly-built Private Theatre (in which audiences would be expected to pay sixpence to three shillings for their admission) and a building that resembled, at least in part, a one-time cockpit that – like Beeston's old public theatre in Clerkenwell – had only charged a penny for entry.⁶³

Whilst demolition and reconstruction on the same site were legally precluded, there was, fortunately for Beeston, one small loophole in the law that gave some freedom to construct a newer and larger property. It was a proclamation of October 12th 1607 that authorised the extension of buildings by up to one third of their original size – provided that the majority of their original foundations were retained.⁶⁴ Having already fallen foul of regulations in the construction of an outhouse to his own home, Beeston would have been well aware of the need to exploit this proclamation's leniency during construction of a 'new' playhouse in Drury Lane. Contemporary accounts indeed seem to clarify that construction work undertaken on Best's cockpit was, by nature, an extension. It is also clear from court records that it was an extension which pushed the one third principle to its limits.⁶⁵

Central to my argument that links Ford's drama to the architecture of anatomy theatres is this legal requirement imposed upon Beeston to retain much of the original shape of Best's circular cockpit – and hence that his theatre project would develop into a smallish round (or U-shaped) structure retaining the circular tiered galleries of the original cockpit and consequently that the his theatre resembled both the old cockpit and – more importantly – the early-modern anatomy theatres that it resembled.

According to John Orrell, the plans for an unnamed U-shaped theatre designed by Inigo Jones and held in the Jones and Webb collection at Worcester College, Oxford (see figs. 19 & 20, over) would seem to fulfil the requirements incumbent upon such a conversion project to the letter. Orrell traces a history of research that identifies these drawings as Beeston's Phoenix (a link first established by Iain Macintosh in 1969)⁶⁶ – asserting that the unnamed Jones plans should now be generally accepted as those drawn up for the construction of that theatre.⁶⁷ It is a persuasive argument and may be summarised as follows:

- (i) The drawings at Worcester College are indisputably in Jones's hand.
- (ii) Internal evidence dates the drawings as being drafted between *circa* 1616 and *circa* 1618.⁶⁸
- (iii) The plans are on a paper whose watermark indicates a date up to and including 1616 but not later.⁶⁹
- (iv) The theatre building projects in London between 1616 and 1618 were only two, one of them the abortive scheme at Puddle Wharf (that was suppressed by the authorities in January 1616/17) the other Beeston's Phoenix. Since the Puddle Wharf project was first

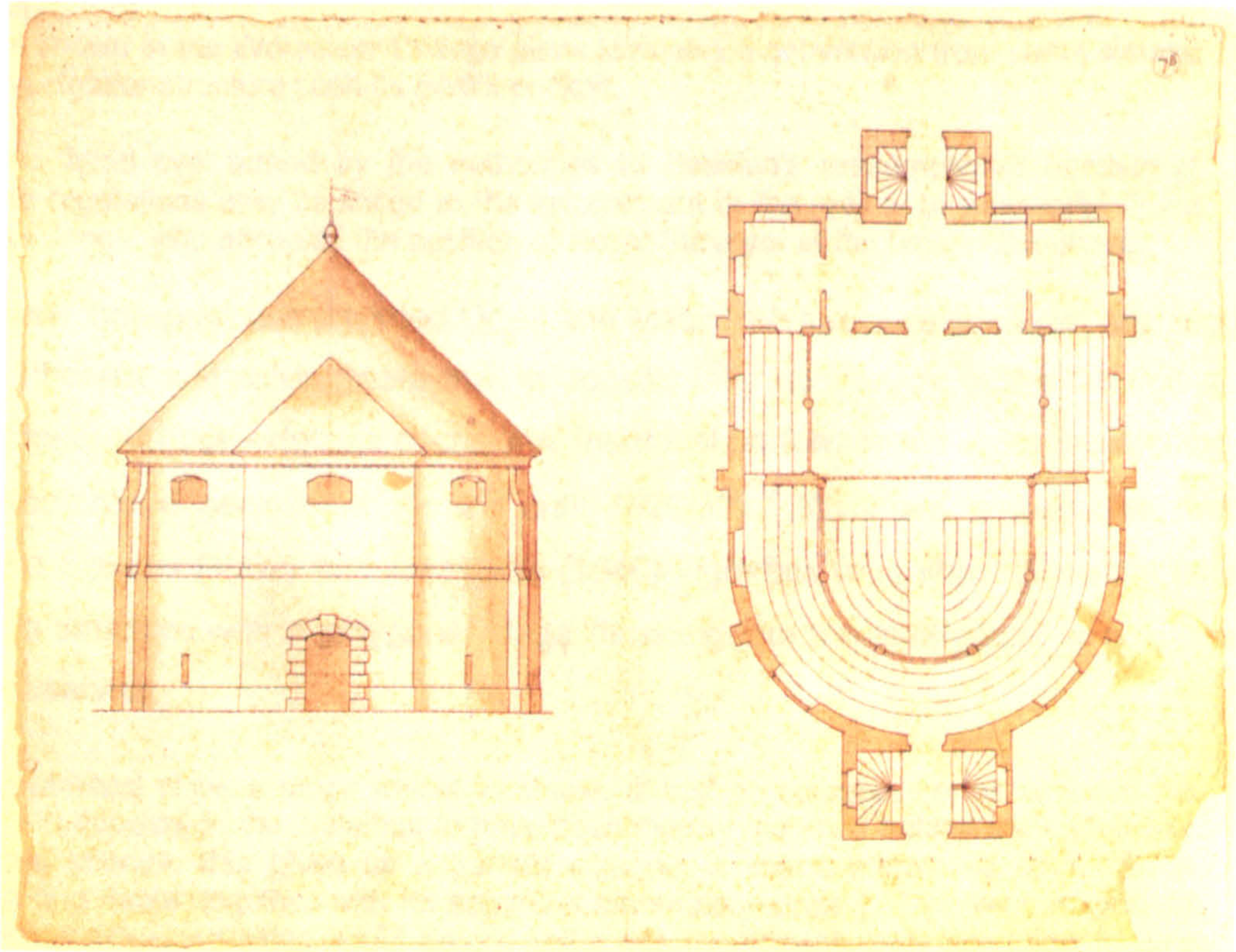


Figure 19

Plan and Elevation of an unnamed theatre by Inigo Jones
Provenance: Worcester College, Oxford.

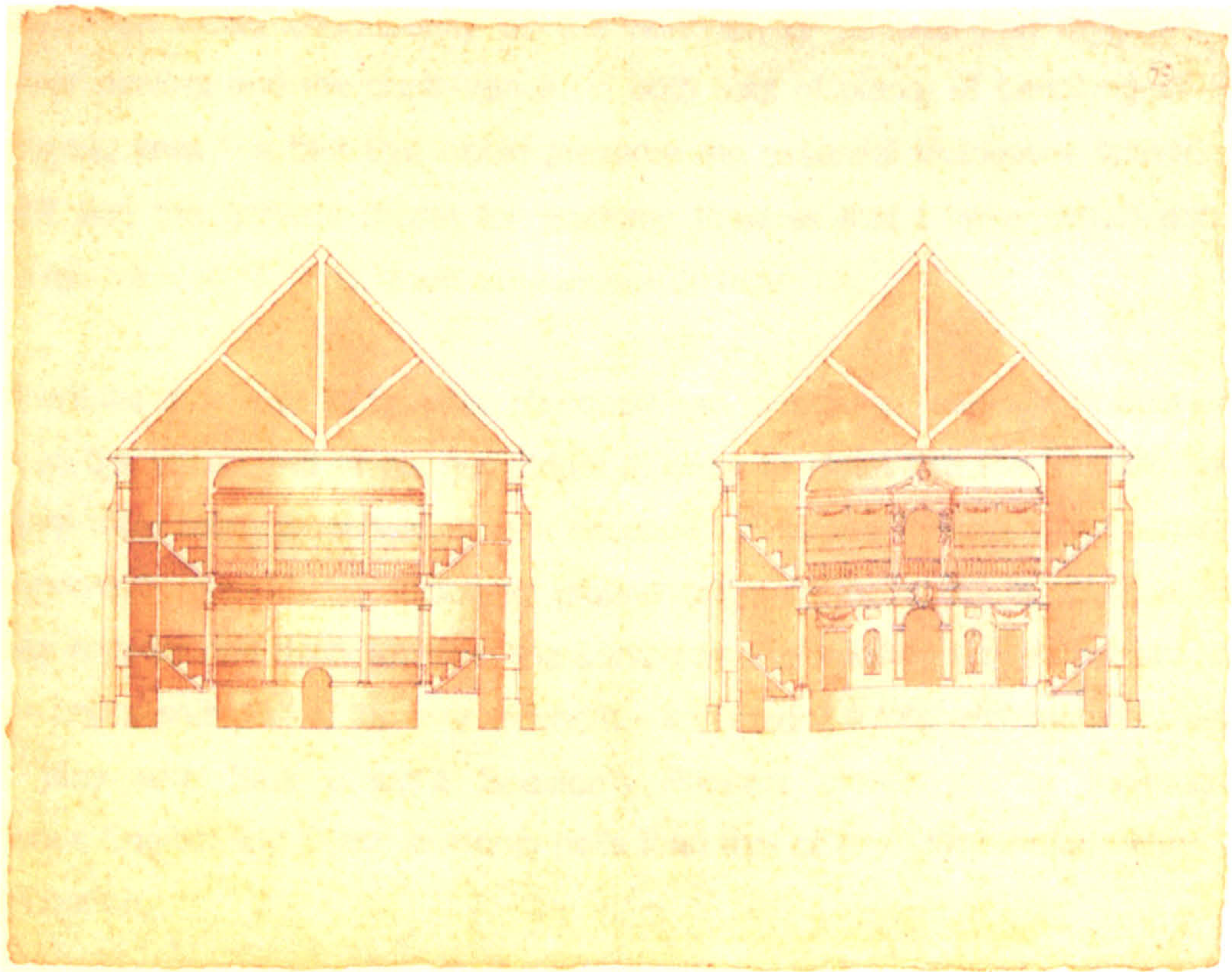


Figure 20

Sections through the auditorium and stage of the same theatre

embarked upon in 1613 – when Jones was out of the country (he was touring Europe between 1613 and 1614) – his involvement in the Puddle Wharf project is doubtful.

(v) The lack of Jones's typical classical embellishments to the curved exterior wall of the theatre shown in the Worcester College plans indicates a conversion from some simpler existing circular structure such as Best's cockpit.

(vi) The 'blind eye' turned by the authorities to Beeston's presumptuous bending of building regulations may be linked to the involvement in the project of a powerful figure such as Jones, who occupied the position of Royal Surveyor at the time of the project.

Glynne Wickham, however, has disputed Orrell and Macintosh's suppositions and has suggested for Beeston's Phoenix a structure more akin to Jones's later conversion of the Cockpit at Court (first built for Henry VIII but – despite occasional theatrical performances in the intervening years – not converted into a permanent theatre until 1629/30).⁷⁰ Wickham argues that, from the evidence of the *Roxana* (1632) and *Messalina* (1640) vignettes (that show theatrical activity in the Phoenix), a structure with a polygonal stage thrusting into the auditorium (as in fig. 21 over) is probable. He observes:

Both [vignettes] show a stage which, in shape, is half an octagon. Let us suppose the half which appears in the drawings to have been exactly matched behind the curtains of the *frons scenae*: this gives us a perfect octagon, a shape almost as useful for a cockfighting 'table' together with its adjoining ambulatory circle [...] in point of date, of course, the actual vignettes would accord better with the Phoenix than with Inigo Jones's Cockpit in Court.⁷¹

So, if we assign either of these models as Beeston's Cockpit Theatre, what evidence is there to link the structure of this new elite Private Theatre to anatomy-hall architecture? Well, the most important connection would undoubtedly be the retention of at least half of Best's original cockpit's circular seating and the continuance (in both sets of plans) of benching *all the way around* the playing area – a fact that would preserve the essential likenesses between Best's original cockpit and the general model for anatomy theatres that I have shown above and elsewhere (see figs. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16 and on the enclosed CD ROM).

Whichever model we decide upon, Beeston obviously had to retain at least *half* of Best's original cockpit circle as the house end of his auditorium in order to claim that the foundations of his original structure were being preserved in their essence for his new theatre – and consequently that his enlargement (presumably including ground originally occupied by cock sheds and outhouses) was only by one third. Keeping the *curved tiers of seating* around the old cockpit's central stage – and possibly all of the way around it – and having a *total architectural diameter of only 40'* to play with thus brought Beeston's Phoenix closer to the architecture of contemporaneous English and Dutch anatomy halls than that of *any other theatrical structure* in early-modern London.

It is *this* architectural accident that created a dramatic space in which the dissected bodies of transgressors of the moral law could now occupy the central focus of audience attention that had previously been occupied by the fighting animals of Best's cockpit. As a result – and as I will now

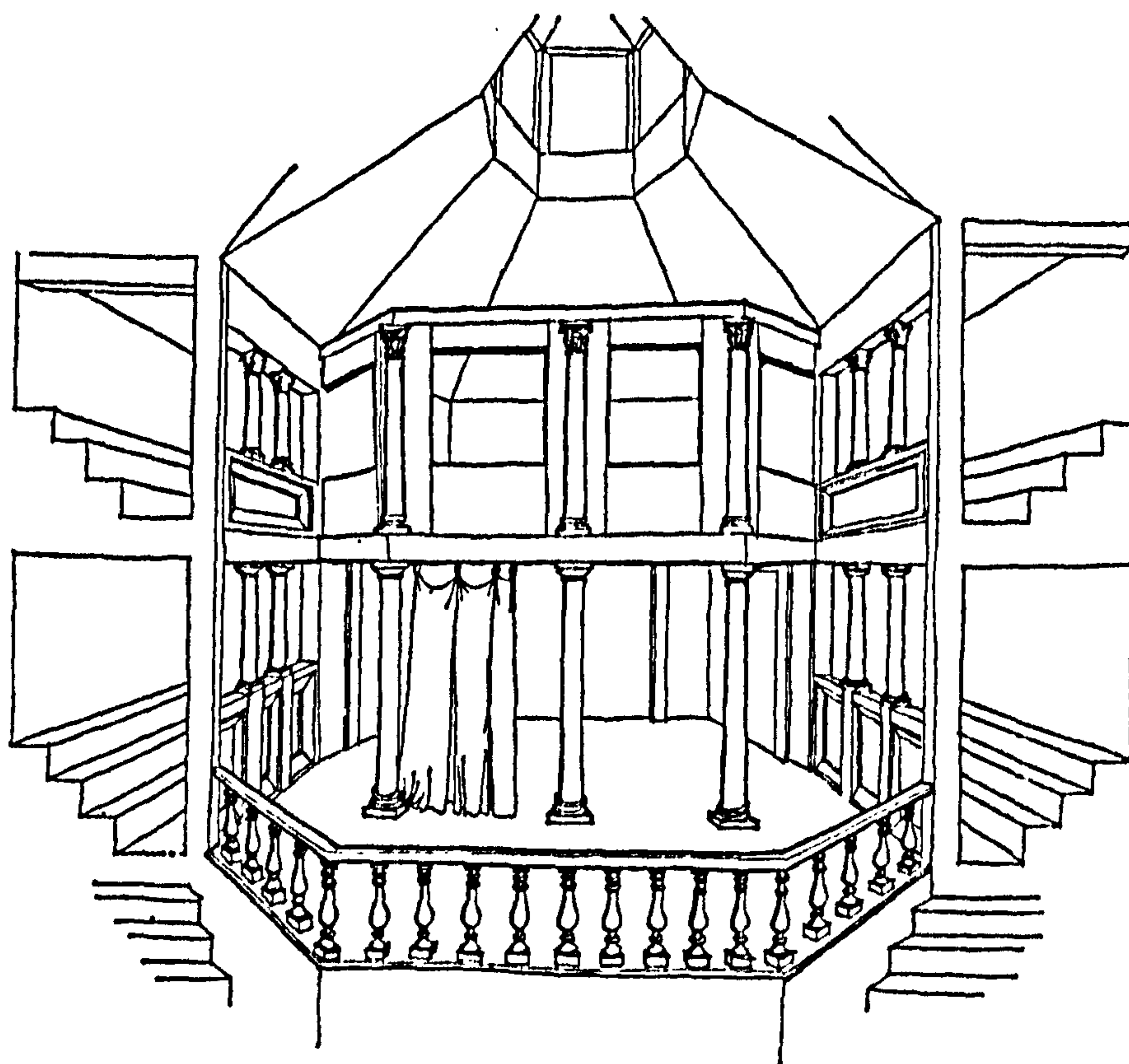


Figure 21

Glynne Wickham's Reconstruction of the Cockpit Theatre on the pattern of the 'Roxana' and 'Messalina' Vignettes.

demonstrate in my next chapter – the plays that John Ford wrote for this space are replete with the imagery of the dissective performances of early-modern anatomy. It is a fact that has deep resonances for the presentation of gendered anatomical difference on the English Caroline stage.

Notes to Chapter V:

¹ Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy* (London: John Stepney and Richard Redmere, 1611), sig. L1^v (V. II. 140 – 53).

² Instances of characters who metaphorically 'anatomise' or are 'anatomised' include Oliver proposing to reveal the truth of his brother Orlando's character to Charles the wrestler: 'I speak but brotherly of him; but should I anatomise him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep, and thou must look pale and wonder.' (*As You Like It* I.i. 147–50) and Rumour: 'But what need I thus/ My well known body to anatomise / Among my household?' (*King Henry IV Part II*, Induction, 20–22).

Lear's plea to Edgar (as Poor Tom): 'Then let them anatomise Regan, see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature to make these hard hearts?' (*King Lear*, III.vi. 77–9) is a rather more interesting case in point, since it would seem to imply the literal dissection of a blood relation (and because the 'Pied Bull' quarto of 1608 pre-dates *The Atheist's Tragedy* quarto by three years). However, given the context of madness (for both Lear and Poor Tom) and the general vagueness of 'let [an unspecified] them [...]', it seems unlikely that an actual staged anatomy of Regan was intended to follow on from this mock judgement scene (in the way that one might seem to be indicated by the more rational D'Amville waiting for the corpse of his nephew from this execution platform).

³ Or indeed on several different stages. The title page of the first quarto informs us that, by the time of its first Impression in 1611, the play had 'often beene acted' in 'divers places.'

⁴ The farce here is acute. A stage direction (sig. L3^r) makes reference to the actor being required to *stagger off the scaffold* and then reappear – possibly drenched in stage blood – utter 18 lines of swan-song death-speech and then finally expire.

⁵ Stage direction after V.ii. 241. (sig. L3^r).

⁶ A footnote here might well be the place to ask whether such an activity is worthwhile at all. The late twentieth century spectator or critic might well feel that the final scene that has most dramatic 'punch' is the missing one (in which our atheist is finally apprehended up to his elbows in the blood and vital organs of an openly disgorged thoracic cavity), but *should* such a scene be expected at all in place of one in which he bunglingly hits himself on the head with an axe? It might prove as fruitful to for us to challenge the reasons *why* a 'missing' scene fits better into our general (if consistently problematic) schema of dark and bloodthirsty Jacobean tragedy rather than the pathetic death scene that we actually have (and that therefore neatly slots into our notion of the morality play tradition) rather than to determine the reason for the missing scene's absence. Jacobean tragedy and medieval morality are both, after all, genres that critics have simply created along conveniently chronological lines.

⁷ A note preceding the Scholar Press facsimile reads:

The text of *The Atheist's Tragedy* is notable for the care which seems to have been taken over the printing of the first edition. There are very few variants among existing copies and obvious textual errors are similarly few. It has been suggested that Tourneur himself may have supervised printing in some way. One striking error is that certain passages of verse have been printed as prose, which has been explained by the theory that the MS was revised imperfectly shortly before printing began, and since most of the passages occur when D'Amville is on stage it may be that Tourneur made last minute changes relating to this character.

Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy, 1611* (Menston: The Scholar Press, 1969). Such speculation is, clearly, dainty meat to the conspiracy theorist.

⁸ Other writers do not decline problematical stagings, however (and I am indebted to James Mardock at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for pointing out to me that Middleton's *Hengis King of Kent* even includes the burning of a witch on stage). As shall be seen below in Chapter VI, in the case of Ford, the sanguine was not always shunned in early modern drama

⁹ I shall return to this below (pp. 234 – 36) in an examination of the mechanics of staging the blood-letting in John Ford's *The Broken Heart*.

¹⁰ Much of this corporal imagery comes, of course, in the metaphysical poetry of Donne who – having had a step-father since the age of four who was a physician and sometime president of the Royal College of Physicians and who lived in St. Bartholomew's Close while his step father probably practised at the hospital – must have had insights as a young boy and man into the culture of dissection prevalent in early-modern London.

The anatomical trope as poetic conceit has recently been well documented by several critics, and particularly by Jonathan Sawday in *The Body Emblazoned, Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (Routledge: London and New York, 1996). I am indebted to Sawday's scholarship make frequent recourse to his work throughout this chapter.

¹¹ I refer, of course, to the *Blason du Cul* in what is perhaps the archetypal collection of such verses: *Blasons Anatomiques du Corps Féminin* (Paris, 1550 [reprint Paris: Gallimard, 1982]). Coincidentally, publication of the first definitive edition of the *Blasons Anatomiques* coincided with the first edition of Vesalius' *de humani corporis fabrica* in 1543. For a detailed account of the function of the *blason* in Renaissance poetic culture, see Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, pp. 191–5. For an enormously influential work on the relationship between sexuality and metaphorical dissection and dismemberment of the female body (especially in the *blason* and Petrarchan verse) see Nancy J. Vickers, 'Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Inquiry* 1981, 8:2, pp. 265 – 279.

¹² This oblique reference to *Othello* is intentional and for two reasons: firstly, because it stresses the Renaissance dramatic desire to see things *staged* and not merely referred to (or reported) as in other traditions (most notably the Greek). Secondly, it is notable that the murder of Desdemona – despite occurring on an altarian bed at the centre of a public amphitheatre – is careful in its avoidance of any actual physical penetration or bloodshed. For an interesting account of the relationship between Vesalian anatomical discourse and the text of *Othello*, see Howard Marchitello, 'Vesalius' *Fabrica* and Shakespeare's *Othello*: Anatomy, Gender and the Narrative Production of Meaning', *Criticism* 35: 4 (Fall, 1993), pp. 529 – 558.

¹³ A brief discussion of Edward Ravenscroft's *The Anatomist or The Sham Doctor* (together with its theatrical antecedent Noël le Breton's *Crispin Médecin*) is given in Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, pp. 44–45.

¹⁴ Dissective murder is my term. I use it to describe murder enacted using implements similar to the tools of anatomical dissection and following the usual route through the cadaver undertaken by the anatomist during demonstrations. It is fully discussed in Chapter VI below.

¹⁵ In partial *ante-answer* to the above questions, let me here note that I shall be operating within a critical framework in which sexual-murder will be seen as undertaken for three principal reasons: (i) to contain the dangerously free floating feminine libido and female corporal identity that had evolved due to a breakdown of the 'one-sex' anatomical model at the end of the sixteenth century; (ii) to make it manifest that female sexual transgression *should* be punished by death; and (iii) to provide a theatrical alternative to the fashionable – yet often inaccessible – anatomy lectures during which real female sexual and reproductive biologies were demonstrated.

¹⁶ These figures are quoted in Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 56 (a bibliography of information relating to the provision of early anatomical instruction is also provided in the footnotes to pp. 4 & 5, on p. 280).

¹⁷ Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 42.

¹⁸ Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 42. The first instance of italicisation is my own.

¹⁹ For a sustained analysis of the intellectual and bourgeois nature of early-seventeenth-century public theatre audiences see Keith Sturges, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987). Andrew Gurr has also noted of the Cockpit in particular that 'Beeston gave the Prince's Men the Cockpit, the first indoor theatre to offer a chance of rivalling Blackfriars as the most popular playhouse with the moneyed section of London Audiences.'

Of Beeston's second Company to play there, Queen Henrietta Maria's Men, Gurr has observed: 'This company rose steadily in reputation and status over the next ten years [it was the only Beeston Company to last more than three]. The master of the Revels signalled their success in the winter season of 1629–30, giving them ten Court performances, compared to twelve for the King's Men, who up to then had given as much of the court entertainment as the rest of the companies put together [...] Shirley was the [major] dramatist for Beeston, and more popular than Davenant or the other young wits providing for the Blackfriars'. In the 1630 – 31 season, Queen Henrietta Maria's Men gave sixteen plays at Court and were the only company besides the King's Men to receive the grant of Royal Liveries. See Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage* 3rd edition (Cambridge: CUP, 1992) pp. 61 – 64.

²⁰ These dates are found in a 'Select List of Plays and their Playhouses' appended to Gurr *Shakespearean Stage*, pp. 234, 242 & 238 respectively. Gurr's probable dates of first performance are drawn from sound evidence and all lie convincingly close to the publication of the first printed editions of 1633.

²¹ Of course, in relation to the presumed general downward moral spiral of English theatre that has been argued to have led to its eventual repression in 1642, the years 1629–31 *might* well be important in their

own right (a theory that is expressed in Martin Butler's *Theatre and Crisis 1632 - 1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)).

The references to 'offence' coming from the theatre that was performed by the early modern period's transvestite actors to which I refer (according to the memories of Charles II's advisors at least) come from 'Killigrew's Patent', and might also constitute important evidence for such a case. The patent reads:

[... And for as much as many plays formerly acted do contain several profane, obscene and scurrilous passages, and the women's parts therein have been acted by men in the habit of women, at which some have taken offence, for the preventing of these abuses for the future, we do hereby strictly command and enjoin that from henceforth no new play shall be acted by either of the said companies containing any passages offensive to piety and good manners, nor any old or revived play containing any such offensive passages as aforesaid, until the same shall be corrected and purged by the said master or governors of the said respective companies from all such offensive and scandalous passages as aforesaid. And we do likewise permit and give leave that all the women's parts to be acted in either of the said two companies for the time to come may be performed by women so long as their recreations, which by reason of the abuses aforesaid were scandalous and offensive, may by such reformation be esteemed not only harmless delight, but useful and instructive representations of human life, to such of our good subjects as shall resort to the same [...]

from *Theatre in Europe: a Documentary History: Restoration and Georgian Theatre 1660-1788*, edited by David Thomas (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 17-18.

Are Ford's the sort of decadent performances to which reference is made? They certainly contrast with the comic nature of the drama that was eventually 'imported' from France (and its female performers). As critics of Italian Renaissance Theatre have also observed, the subservient position of Beeston's Boys was also starkly divergent to the fame of actresses such as Isabella Andreini in continental Europe (and I am grateful to Professor Richard A. Andrews of the Department of Italian at the University of Leeds for making a draft of his essay 'Isabella Andreini and Others: Women on Stage in the Late Cinquecento' (forthcoming) available to me in this respect).

²² 'New Science' may not, of course, be treated as an entirely uniform nor accordant epistemology during the early-seventeenth century. As Valerie Traub has noted: 'Science, of course, was neither a singular nor unified entity - in this period or in ours[; being] constructed out of various and often conflicting knowledges and practices.' Traub therefore delineates her own use of the term (with which I would broadly concur) as follows: "science" in my usage exists as a shorthand for the early modern commitment to empirical modes of investigation and verification' Valerie Traub, 'Gendering mortality in early modern anatomies', in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 86.

²³ Whilst it is obviously true that the hold of Cartesian philosophy was not achieved overnight following the publication of *Discours de la méthode* in 1637, there is a strong 'chicken and egg' debate over whether Descartes was truly the inventor of such a monumental system of belief or merely the recorder and developer of thoughts that were circulating amongst the elite intellectual circles of northern Europe, especially Holland, during the sixteen twenties and thirties. In this light, it is noteworthy that Crooke chose to entitle his anatomy *Microcosmographia* in 1616, but that Harvey's *de motu cordis* had already shifted its anatomical focus to a specific organ by 1627.

²⁴ Harvey, despite being an Englishman who first studied medicine at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, completed his medical studies in Padua (Italy) and had *de motu cordis* published for the first time in Holland. The fact that the work did not first appear in English and was not printed in England until the translation of Zaccariah Wood (London, 1653) indicates that provision for anatomical publications (as well as for public demonstrations) was somewhat lagging behind in England during the period of Harvey's work.

²⁵ Rene Descartes, *Philosophical Letters*, edited and translated by Anthony Kenney (Oxford, 1970), p. 64. (Cited in Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 147). My italics.

²⁶ Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 148.

²⁷ Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 148. A useful summary of Descartes' travels and publications, including the influence of Holland, may be found in Pierre Guenancia, *Descartes "Bien Conduire sa Raison"* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), especially pp. 26-51.

²⁸ Despite a clearly microcosmographic notion of the body existing both during and prior to the middle ages, I am taking the 're-birth' of European anatomy as occurring in the mid-sixteenth century - and hence my eighty five year period is from the initial publication of Vesalius' *de corporis humani fabrica* in 1543.

²⁹ See Guenancia, *Descartes*, p. 45.

³⁰ Paracelsianism (which Sawday has described as 'the fusion of chemistry, alchemy, Christian Neo-Platonism, and Hermeticism') is the name given to the doctrines of Phillippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus Von Hohenheim (1493 – 1541), who took the name Paracelsus (or greater than Celsus – the renowned 1st century AD Roman physician) whilst studying at the University of Ferrara.

Paracelsus was the German-Swiss physician and alchemist who is credited with having established the role of chemistry in medicine. The son of a somewhat impoverished German doctor and chemist who taught chemical theory and practice in Augsburg, Paracelsus is said to have studied mineral science as a youth and to have attended the universities of Basel, Tübingen, Vienna, Wittenberg, Leipzig, Heidelberg and Cologne as an itinerant teenage scholar. He graduated from the University of Vienna with a baccalaureate in medicine in 1510 (aged only 17), but subsequently went on to the University of Ferrara (since its practice of criticising the teachings of Galen and the medieval Arab physicians appealed to him). He consistently claimed to have been awarded a doctorate in medicine from Ferrara in 1516 (although no official records survive for that year). An eclectic and controversial scholar, Paracelsus believed in practical alchemy, old-wives tales, as well as in the teachings of gypsies and sorcerers. After travelling extensively in Europe and North Africa, he finally took up a post at the University of Basel, at which institution (on June 24th, 1527) he publicly burned the works of Avicenna and Galen. He also believed in the power of nature to cure 'by herself' and is therefore credited with discoveries in chemotherapy and homeopathy. It has been observed of his school that: 'Paracelsianism [...] was central to the defence of the old intellectual order. Emphasis within [it] on the unity and order of the cosmos appealed to those who were anxious to defend older political and intellectual hierarchies' (Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 232).

³¹ For an account of Ford's connections with a Catholic coterie in England, see Lisa Hopkins, *John Ford's Political Theatre* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 3 - 29.

³² I would argue that it is, for example, no coincidence that Burton's first great secular appropriation of anatomy, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* was first published in 1621 (the same year that Ford, Dekker and Rowley's *Witch of Edmonton* first appeared in print).

³³ There is a post-colonial issue here, although Galen is commonly termed a 'Roman' Physician, he was actually born and lived for most of his life in Asia Minor – or modern day Turkey.

³⁴ For a discussion of the practice of dispersed burial amongst the nobility and in religious orders see Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, pp. 98 - 100.

³⁵ Despite admitting in his notebooks to dissecting ten human cadavers, Da Vinci deters the would-be anatomist by referring to a 'fear of passing the night hours in the company of these corpses, quartered and flayed and horrible to behold.' Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo Da Vinci*, edited by Irma A. Richter (Oxford, 1980), p. 151.

³⁶ See Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p.196.

³⁷ Ironically perhaps, Tourneur could not even have presented a religiously sanctioned dissection in his play, since, as we have seen, the criticisms of blasphemy that were regularly made against theatre meant that few forms of semi-religious rite found their way onto the London stage either.

³⁸ Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 64. My italics.

³⁹ It is the direct inspiration of the devil that causes both Mother Sawyer and Doctor Faustus to draw circles and magic symbols on the floor and to locate themselves within them. That danger was perceived to be inherent in the appropriation of such necromantic symbols is evidenced by the Faustus woodcut and the duologue in which Mother Sawyer gives her soul to Dog in *The Witch of Edmonton* (Act II. scene I). Sawyer's pact with the devil is sealed in blood; the visual parallel of an anatomist standing at the centre of a Vitruvian circle, covered the blood of his dissected corpse, would therefore seem obvious. In the case of Faustus, a medical context is also present because he has been seen (and heard) reading Galen in Act I scene I of the play.

⁴⁰ A detailed analysis of the Vesalian title page's religious symbolism is provided in Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, pp. 68-78. A more general discussion of its emblems is also given in Charles D. O'Malley, *Andreas Vesalius of Brussels 1514-1564* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1964), pp. 139-144.

⁴¹ Sawday asserts (in *The Body Emblazoned*, pp. 170 -172) that the separation of the body and soul undertaken by Cartesian 'New Science' endured until Freudian psychoanalysis rejoined the body to the psyche in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁴² It might well be argued, for instance, that the model for Inigo Jones' New Barber Surgeon's Hall of 1636 is itself derived as much from the Phoenix theatre as from the precedent of existing *theatrum anatomicorum*.

⁴³ Sebastiano Serlio, *Tutte L'Opere D'Architettura et Prospetiva* (Venice, 1545 – 7).

⁴⁴ O'Malley, *Vesalius*, p. 140.

⁴⁵ See, for example, the caption underneath Hogarth's *Reward of Cruelty* facing the title page of H. M. Sinclair and A. H. T. Robb-Smith's *A Short History of Anatomical Teaching in Oxford* (Oxford: O.U.P, 1950).

⁴⁶ The Royal Cockpit built by Henry VIII at Whitehall was, of course, exceptionally large for such structures. For visual records of more regular sized pits, see the Hogarth engraving of the Dartmouth Street Cockpit or Rowlandson's colour print of the same (both reproduced in Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages* Vol. 2, Part II (London and New York, 1972), plates XVI & XVII).

The surviving structure of a circular cockpit with a conical thatched roof standing in the yard of the *Hawk and Buckle Inn*, Denby, North Wales is reproduced in George Ryley Scott, *The History of Cockfighting* (London: Charles Skilton Ltd, 1957), p.58. Other visual evidence of the early-modern cockpit may be found in the frontispiece of R[obert] H[owlett] *The Royal Pastime of Cock-Fighting* (London, 1709) – reproduced here as fig. 15 and discussed later in this chapter.

⁴⁷ Thomas Platter, *Thomas Platter's Travels in England*, edited by Claire Williams (London, 1937), pp. 167-68.

⁴⁸ Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 75

⁴⁹ Zacharias Von Uffenbach, *London in 1710*, translated by W. H. Quarrell and M. Mare (Oxford, 1928), p. 48.

⁵⁰ The morning in question was Wednesday 18th June 1710. The anatomy theatre of the Royal College of Physicians is described as being in an 'elegant turret' at the front of the College's Warwick Lane buildings (although Von Uffenbach was disappointed with the lack of decoration in its interior, commenting 'there is nothing to be seen in it but the table and benches-not a single skeleton except that of an ostrich.' Von Uffenbach, *London in 1710*, p. 44).

⁵¹ Edward Hatton, *A New View of London: or, an ample account of that City in Eight sections* (London, 1708), pp. 596-97.

⁵² Hatton, *A New View*, Vol. II, p. 648.

⁵³ For an account of Best's cockpit construction, see Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), pp. 88-99.

⁵⁴ Burbage's conversion of the Upper Frater Building is discussed in detail in Sturges, *Private Theatre*, pp. 27- 55.

⁵⁵ Although, as theatre historians since Leslie Hotson have noted, the theatre was actually never burned down at all. It merely had its interior furnishings ripped out by the rioting apprentices and there were therefore no architectural alterations made during its refitting.

⁵⁶ The proclamation of 16th July 1615 is cited in Norman Brett-James, *The Growth of Stuart London* (London, 1935), p. 68.

⁵⁷ Again, this is discussed in Brett-James, *Growth of Stuart London*, p. 91.

⁵⁸ The legislation was perhaps a touch prophetic, given the events of the summer of 1666. A thorough survey of James's foresight in this matter is provided in Brett-James, *Growth of Stuart London*, pp. 80-100.

⁵⁹ Examples of the strict execution of these laws, including an instance in which one outbuilding of the Clerkenwell tenement belonging to Christopher Beeston was ordered demolished by the High Sheriff of Middlesex on 18 September 1616, is given in John Orrell, *The Theatres of Inigo Jones and John Webb* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 44.

⁶⁰ Although the Blackfriars project did fall foul of the authorities on other grounds – its proximity to the City, together with complaints from local residents, meant that Burbage was denied permission to perform at the Blackfriars with his adult company and was forced him to give the theatre over to boy players, for financial reasons, until 1608.

⁶¹ The deposition is cited in Sturges, *Private Theatre*, p. 38.

⁶² Beeston would have doubtless remembered the complaints of the Blackfriars' residents when the dissolved monastery was converted into a theatre: they had cost Burbage's company thirteen years of occupancy at their venue. He would also have been aware of the more recent problems of Henslowe and Alleyn, whose Puddle Wharf project had fallen also at the stumbling block of local residents' complaints and was halted by the Privy Council (See Sturges, *Private Theatre*, p. 29). The conversion of a building that had already hosted popular public entertainments into a more refined theatre would, presumably, have also been more acceptable to residents than a change of use at another site.

⁶³ Precedents for a rectangular (Serlian) Private or Court indoor theatre are many and other than the Blackfriars include: Simon Basil's Christ Church Theatre, Oxford (1605); John Webb's Paved Court Theatre at Somerset House, and the various temporary conversions of the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall. For a list of admission prices at Private Playhouses See Sturges, *Private Theatre*, p. 15.

⁶⁴ The importance of this loophole to the construction of Beeston's Cockpit is discussed in Orrell, *Jones and Webb*, p. 45.

⁶⁵ John Chamberlain describes the Cockpit Theatre as 'a newe play house (sometime a cockpit)' in a letter cited in G. E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford 1941-68), Vol. VI, p. 55. (the letter is also quoted in Orrell, *Jones and Webb*, p. 43).

Court Records of The Middlesex Sessions for the 5th and 6th of September 1616 describe the project as 'a new buildinge in hand to be sett up and erected in Drury Lane nere Lincolnes Inne Feildes att and adjoininge to the Cocke-Pitt' (Middlesex County Records, II p. 125-6. (quoted in Orrell, *Jones and Webb*, p. 44). Both Beeston and his bricklayer were brought before the sessions to account for their activities.

⁶⁶ The claim was made in Ian Macintosh, 'Inigo Jones-Theatre Architect', *TABS* 31 (1973), pp. 101-4.

⁶⁷ The cataloguer of the Jones Webb collection at Worcester College, John Harris, also now attributes the sketch to Beeston's Cockpit.

⁶⁸ This dating was undertaken by John Harris and appears in Harris, Orgel and Strong, *The King's Arcadia: Inigo Jones and The Stuart Court* (London, 1973), p. 109.

⁶⁹ See D. F. Rowan, 'A Neglected Jones/Webb Theatre Project: the "Barber Surgeons' Hall Writ Large"', *Shakespeare Survey* 23 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 127.

⁷⁰ See Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300 - 1660* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972) Vol. II (1576 to 1660), Part II, pp. 45 - 48, and p. 78.

⁷¹ Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages*. Vol. II, Part II, p. 82.

Chapter VI:

Theatre of Blood: John Ford's Dramatic Anatomies and the Female Body Emblazoned

Yet I, to save those eyes of thine from weeping,
Being to write a story of us two,
In Stead of Ink, I dipp'd my sad pen in blood [...]

John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton*, 1621.¹

I

Reference to anatomy and its architectural environment come early in Ford's career. In the collaborative tragicomedy *The Witch of Edmonton* (originally presented by the first company to perform at Beeston's Phoenix, Prince Charles' Men, in 1621 – only four years after the new theatre had opened)² a country yeoman, John Carter, surprisingly remarks in relation to the magnanimous provision of his stout Hertfordshire betrothal banquet:

[...] Should I diet three
days at one of the slender city suppers, you might send me
to Barber-Surgeons Hall the fourth day, to hang up for an
anatomy!

(I. ii. 29-32)

Carter's joke plays upon a contemporary understanding of 'anatomy' as a 'skeleton, shrunken dried corpse, withered lifeless form or emaciated living being' (O.E.D);³ yet, despite its primary (comic) function as a heavy-handed assertion of the superiority of rural fare (and denigration of the comparatively slight victuals that are on offer in the City of London), this patriarch's observation resonates throughout my inquiry for three reasons. Carter's reference is not a metaphorical abstraction, but is rather an *explicit* reference to one *specific* architectural environment; accordingly his words:

(i) Demonstrate a concrete awareness of the Barber Surgeon's Hall as one of the two principal venues for anatomical dissection in early-modern London.

(ii) Show that Ford had either *visited* the building or *heard about* its interior in order for this character to know that it had skeletons and preserved organs displayed within it.

and

(iii) Conjure up the architectural features of a known venue of anatomical dissection early in the first act of this play (and thereby call to mind the social *function* of that environment, whilst setting up an *analogy* between medical and theatrical spaces – a correlation that will repeatedly serve to augment the references to anatomy, dissection and the interior body that permeate this play's imagery).

Moreover, material (and theatrical) analysis of Carter's 'joke' must also surely take into account that it was cracked in front of a relatively small and elite audience who were congregated around this performer on at least three sides – and were seated according to wealth or status on an (at least) semicircular rake leading down to a raised stage that was bordered, if we believe the *Roxana* and *Messalina* vignettes, by a wooden balustrade.⁴ All of which architectural phenomena were almost exactly as they would have been in the anatomy hall to which this character 'humorously' made reference. It would therefore seem reasonable to conclude that Ford's 'honest Hertfordshire yeoman' is being used to point out a *similarity* between the Phoenix Theatre in Drury Lane and the Barber-Surgeons' Anatomy Hall in Monkwell Street. But *what* similarity? What *motive* might there be in bringing this architectural coincidence to mind?

Obviously, we can never be certain; yet one thing would appear evident: Carter's statement operates on more than just a literal (architectural) level. As such it would be almost completely pointless; and I therefore want to posit the notion here that (rather than being a simple fashionable reference to the similarity between two *structural designs*) this reference to the Barber-Surgeons' Anatomy Hall is, instead, the precursor to a complex system of comparison and metaphor that will subsequently be used to delineate an analogous relationship between two *institutions*. Establishing, as they do so early in the action, a correlation between the architecture of Ford's principal theatre and that of the anatomy hall that it accidentally resembled, Carter's lines activate a kind of 'corporal backdrop' – against which the metaphorical 'anatomisations' of crime and punishment that will (supposedly) be undertaken by this play (and therefore by the institution of the theatre itself) will be set off.

There are over twenty further instances of sustained dissective imagery to follow in the surviving 1658 quarto of *The Witch of Edmonton* (principally in relation to the heart and blood, but with instances of 'wombs', 'bosoms', 'carcasses', 'flayed skin', 'mangled bodies' and even one violent threat to 'tear [a] body into a thousand pieces'). Whether intentionally or not, then, Carter's lines (that come in what is only the second scene of this play) set up an affinity between what is presumably supposed to happen at the Phoenix: the *metaphorical* anatomisation of hypocrisy, the cutting, exposing and revelation of *social* ills; and the demonstrative and analytical *biological* activities that were enacted in the *real* anatomy theatres that it accidentally resembled.

All of this, however, still leaves it unclear as to the precise *significance* of choosing to connect the Phoenix to one specific *theatrum anatomicum*. Nor does it reveal exactly *who* is intended to be the object of Ford's metaphorical (and meta-theatrical) 'anatomies.' Were Ford's verbal dissections, staged bloodshed and faked incisions (cuts that we will see in this chapter to have

principally been made into the bodies of *female* characters) simple, alternative provision for the unattainable anatomy lesson;⁵ or did this playwright wish to contrast the curative aim of another sort of 'anatomisation' – the theatrical, sociological and *metaphorical* evisceration of iniquity – against the possibly pointless brutality of literal scientific vivisection in Barber-Surgeons' Halls. In short: are Ford's female *victims* the object of his metaphorical anatomies, or are their male 'anatomists'?

Contemporary scholars might well be tempted to identify a *critique* of medical anatomies in Ford, or to posit that he is suggesting that his dramatic (and sociological) eviscerations are superior in some way to the brutal violence of actual anatomy; yet the principal critical problem that is posed by *The Witch of Edmonton* (I doubt if it was *theatrically* problematic to its first audiences – and experience leads me to believe that the play's 'anatomy' is hardly even *noticed* by modern spectators)⁶ revolves around the question as to whether Ford's narrative is intended to prompt spectators to *reassess* their desire to witness female dissection (and therefore to re-evaluate the practices of experimental anatomy); or merely to provide a sensationalist *re-enactment* of the misogynist performatives that were inherent in its un-seaming of the female form (and, therefore, to shore up the patriarchal register of dominance over the feminine body within which anatomical science operated). *The Witch of Edmonton's* principal act of bloodshed is perpetrated by a sadistic bigamist-murderer; so, is this fact supposed to *put people off* evisceration or *turn them on* to it?

References to anatomy may certainly be seen to be judgmental in this play. When Anne Ratcliffe alludes to dissective practice in her 'insane' dialogue with Mother Sawyer, a negative view of science is undoubtedly made manifest. She retorts to Sawyer (who is at this point claiming to be a lawyer): 'I prithee, let me scratch thy face; for thy pen / has flayed off a good many men's skins [...] (IV. i. 184 -5). These words graphically remind Ratcliffe's audience of the flayed cadaver in the anatomy theatre (or – what is more likely – the more widely-available dissected 'muscle-men' illustrations of various published anatomical works); yet they *also* draw attention to the hand-in-glove relationship between lawyers and anatomists during the legal processes that designated precisely *which* corpses were to be stripped of their flesh in order to have their tissue and muscle laid bare. Ratcliffe's words consequently address the class-based agenda of the means of (anatomical knowledge) production (as a function of the supply of cadavers for human dissection). *However ...* the whole dynamic of this comment is unavoidably *problematised* (and is perhaps therefore undermined) by the fact that Ratcliffe is clearly considered to be 'mad' as she utters these words. Indeed, only eight lines later, this woman is dancing around, shouting: 'doodle, doodle, doodle, doodle. Welcome sergeants. Welcome devil. Hands, hands, hold hands and dance around, around, around!' (IV.i. 92 – 94). So why does Ford present his subtle critique of anatomy as something that can only be articulated by a raving madwoman?

The ultimate commodification of the corpse (and it has now become the specifically *female* cadaver) that was undertaken by early-modern anatomists may also be seen to be critiqued twice further during the course of *The Witch of Edmonton*. When dead women are reduced to 'carcasses' (like those on the anatomical dissection slab) by representatives of patriarchal authority (such as fathers or the devil) spectators might possibly be invited to question the *morality* of those who so reduce them. Examples such as that in which Carter disowns his victim-daughter's corpse and instructs Old Thorney:

Sir, take that carcass and give me this.
 I'll not own her now; she's none of mine
 Bob me off with a dumb show? No, I'll have life.
 This is my son too, and while there's life in him,
 'Tis half mine; take you half that silence for't.
 When I speak, I look to be spoken to:
 Forgetful slut [...]

(III. iii. 100 - 04).

might thus be interpreted as criticism of this mercenary social climber. Carter is seen here to be a man obsessed with self-interest, and is guilty of using his daughter solely as currency in the purchase of dynastic status. Once Susan can no longer perform the duties of a daughter in the marriage market she is useless to him – a slab of dead-meat – and Carter therefore instantly lays claim to Thorney's male issue and estate. The severity and venom of his language towards a cadaver-daughter at such a moment as this might thus be interpreted as a device that was intended to lead Ford's audiences on to question the *morality* of viewing *any* female body – dead or otherwise – as a mere object or 'carcass'.

In a similar vein, when Dog refers to the diabolic propensity to occupy the deceased bodies of transgressors of the moral order:

The old cadaver of some self-strangled wretch
 We sometimes borrow, and appear humane.
 The carcass of some disease-slain strumpet
 We varnish fresh, and wear as her first beauty [...]

(V.I. 139 – 42)

his lines can be read as a deliberate besmirching of the ethics of *anyone* who is prepared to go beyond Carter's limits of objectification, and to use *dead* bodies for their own good⁸ – even the bodies of transgressors of the moral order such as Thorney's bigamous 'whore' wife (who is also Carter's 'slut' daughter). One might therefore detect here (once again) an implication that the wish to *profit* from strumpet or suicide corpses (a desire that anatomists clearly had) should be viewed as immoral – even satanic – that such appropriations were undertaken for selfish reasons, by fiends.

Despite the hope that is engendered by such readings, however – and the flickering possibility of some kind of sympathetic (perhaps even proto-feminist) motivation behind Ford's representations of anatomy that is thereby engendered – I cannot help but return to the fact that

critical responses that attempt to tease out metaphorical 'problematisations' of anatomical dissection in such moments seem to me to be (unfortunately, yet unequivocally) dashed by the fact that it is precisely the *upholders* of such elitist and egocentric patriarchal values and actions (Dog and Old Carter in Ford's text – the anatomist in society) who regularly emerge unpunished by the events of their dramatic narratives (and, perhaps more importantly, lives). I include as Appendix V to this dissertation the biography of Dr. William Petty, a typical early-modern English anatomist whose use of cadavers enabled him to orchestrate a meteoric rise in wealth and status; this document merits careful consideration – not least because Petty was clearly *not* the only middle-class male whose use of dead (female) bodies brought immense social and financial benefits. Moreover, both the prostitute and the self-slaughtered cadaver – being those of base criminals – were unquestionably considered fair game for the Renaissance dissection slab; for as John Donne famously observed in 1611: 'Worst malefactors [...] Doe publique good, cut in anatomies.'⁹

In the light of what would appear to be an ineluctable truth, then, as we think about Renaissance anatomy, we might do well to call to mind Walter Benjamin's observation that 'there is no document of civilisation which is not at the same time a document of barbarism'; we might also do well to speculate on the discretely gendered nature of much early-modern dissective spectacle (in which ascendant males from the burgeoning intellectual-classes profited from the dead bodies of primarily lower-class women).¹⁰ In addition to this, however, we might also do well to remember that it is often the sociological preoccupations of our *own* society that deliberately (and tenaciously) lead us to seek out such conflicts, controversies and dichotomies – rather than the troubled consciences of previous 'civilising' cultures (who may well have seen their processes of intellectual 'development', geographical 'expansion' or sociological 'structuring' as entirely less problematic phenomena).

Returning to Ford, however (in a point that I hope will clarify this problem of pinning down one specific author's attitude to the gendering of dissection somewhat), after Frank Thorney's murder of his wife, Susan, *The Witch of Edmonton's* vicissitude concerning whether to *sanction* or *censure* the appropriation of female carrion in anatomical demonstration appears to reach its apogee. It does so in Act IV scene ii, a curious and remarkable sub-unit of dramatic action that starts off with a stage direction calling for the recumbent body of Frank Thorney (the play's bigamist murderer) to be suddenly 'thrust forth'¹¹ on a raised platform, centre stage – exactly like a cadaver at the centre of the anatomy halls that the Phoenix accidentally resembled. The scene leads on (through exchanges between Frank, his first wife Winnifride – who is at this point disguised as a page boy – his murdered wife's father and her sister Katherine) to a moment of realisation in which the patriarch (Carter) is presented with forensic evidence that proves Frank to be the murderer of his daughter.

Despite the fact that, on the surface of the scene at least, Ford's audiences are presented with a narrative that apparently represents both healing and justice (in that Thorney and Carter both employ juridical vocabularies that include reference to 'evidence' a 'Jurie' and a 'Judge' – and because the delirious Frank also believes that 'surgeons' are being called to re-open his wounds since that is considered the best way to treat them), a strong punitive (and anatomical) sub-text is *also* clearly present in this scene; its imagery is clearly dissective – and a dominant anatomical undertone moves towards its first climax in the following exchange:

Frank.	Do the surgeons say my wounds are dangerous then?
Carter.	Yes, yes, and there's no way with thee but one.
Frank.	Would he were here to open them
Carter	I'll go to fetch him. I'll make a holiday to see thee as I wish.
	(Exit to fetch officers)
Winn.	Master, how do you?
Frank	Pretty well now boy I have such odd qualms come cross my stomach. I'll fall to. Boy, cut me.
	(IV.ii. 133 – 43)

Here the word 'surgeons' is used for the second (and last) time in the play (it therefore significantly picks up on Carter's initial reference to the *Barber-Surgeon* as *anatomist*). Moreover, the word is found in a dramaturgical sub-unit that revolves around cutting, bleeding and the discovery (and repeated display) of a possible instrument of anatomical evisceration: Frank's 'bloody knife' (and the word 'knife' is itself used ten times here in a scene of only 190 lines, beginning around Frank's frenzied repetition 'The knife, the knife, the Knife!' (IV. ii. 118)).

In addition to this, Frank's line: 'Boy, cut me' (despite, again, containing a literal request for healing: "cut me [a piece of chicken]" – as cooked poultry has been brought on stage to nourish the ailing Thorney) is left unfinished – and it consequently becomes an ambiguous request that some sort of incision be made into the prostrate body that this character has already articulated a desire to have 'opened' by 'surgeons' (a body that is also located at the centre of the Phoenix's anatomy-hall-like stage). Moreover, Carter (despite Simon Trussler's editorial conjecture that he exits to 'fetch officers') actually says that he leaves to fetch a 'surgeon' – who will work on Frank's body and thereby enable the old man 'to see [him] as [he] wish[es].' Now, given that Carter has just found out the truth of Frank's brutal murder of his daughter, this would presumably be in an injurious rather than in a curative situation. At this point, then, what I want to assert is that the murderer of this play has been metaphorically set up to progress into the hands of a [*Barber*]'surgeon' in whose control we have been informed there is 'no way but one [...]'

Ford's imagery is clearly operating on two levels here. What his audience hear (yet is surely unintended by the delirious criminal) is the voice of a willing subject calling for an anatomist's knife. In asking to be healed, Frank unwittingly calls Carter's '[*Barber*]-Surgeons' to mind and therefore reminds his audience that, as a 'worst malefactor' and double transgressor of the moral

order (he is both a bigamist and a murderer) he is on his way to death – and that any knife that his body will experience will therefore not be associated with *healing* but rather with the further *punishment* of his remains. Moreover, both the language and the staging of this scene evoke the characters, performances and dramatic spectacle of anatomical demonstration. As a result, then, the play's processes of uxoricide, arrest, trial, conviction, execution (and promised evisceration) all seem to be collapsed into a single scene: Frank has been found out as a murderer, his actions have been replayed, he has been carefully 'judged' through the presentation of 'evidence' and 'testimony', he has been descried guilty and he now 'discovers' himself (in both a *literal* theatrical sense as well as a metaphorical one) as the potential focus of some decidedly anatomical attention. This murderer is apparently himself even calling out to be dissected – and he has certainly become the logical object of this play's metaphorical 'anatomy' of crime.

Fascinatingly, however, even as Frank appears to articulate this willingness to become the object of an anatomical investigation, Ford retracts the proposition – because it is exactly *at this point* (when an *at least* metaphorical dissection of Frank really *should* take place) that Old Carter arrives back on stage; not with a 'surgeon' or even 'officers' but, startlingly, with a female replacement for his audience's voyeuristic corporal gaze – and Frank's proxy is, crucially, the very female cadaver that he has himself already incised:

[Enter] Father with her [Susan's body] in a coffin.

O. Cart. That? What? O now I see her; 'tis a young wench, my Daughter, Sirrah, sick to the death; and hearing thee to be an ex-cellent Rascall for letting blood, she looks out a Casement, and crys, Help, help, stay that man; him I must have, or none.

Frank. For pities sake, remove her; see she stares With one broad open eye still in my face.

O. Cart. Thou puttest both hers out, like a Villaine as thou art; Yet see, she is willing to lend thee one againe to finde out the murtherer, and that's thy self.

Frank. Old man thou liest.

O. Cart. So shalt thou I' th' Gaol. Run for Officers.

Kat. O thou merciless slavel
She was (though yet above ground) in her Grave
To me, but thou hast torne it up againe.
Mine eyes too much drown'd must now feel more raine.

O Cart. Fetch officers.

Exit Katherine

Frank. For whom?

O. Cart. For thee, sirrah, sirrah: some knives have foolish Posies upon them, but thine has a villainous one; look, Oh! It is
[enamell'd
With the heart blood of thy hated wife, my beloved daughter. What Saist thou to this evidence? Is't not sharp? Dos't not strike home? Thou cans't not answer

honestly, and without a trembling heart. To this one
point, this terribly bloody point.

(IV.ii. 143 – 165)

Re-entering with a corpse, and allowing Katherine to set Frank up in the guise of a grave-robber (and therefore subtly calling to mind the liminal night-time activities of even the most famous of anatomists: 'She was (though yet above ground) in her Grave / To me, but *thou hast torne it up againe*') Carter arrives with the surrogate object of his audience's corporal attention. For some reason (and by means of a sly metaphorical 'slab-trick') Ford accordingly avoids developing the metaphorical 'anatomisation' of this play's *murderer* – and instead substitutes Frank's body with that of his *victim*.

It is as if a *male* anatomical evisceration has suddenly become a theatrical impossibility; and spectators eyes are consequently (and ingeniously) drawn away from the prostrate male body at the centre of the Phoenix stage in order to focus (once again) on the emblazoned anatomy of this dead woman's 'face', 'eye' 'blood' and 'heart' – together with the morbid instrument of her dispatch. Frank's metaphorical 'anatomisation' is consequently averted and his murder of Susan once more enables the *female* body to be brought back the imaginative centre of Ford's dramatic space (and in doing so it is again 'dissected' into its constituent parts). In the light of this fact, then, the concluding couplet to this scene from the play's murderer is somewhat revealing. Before the entire company exit, Frank concludes: 'I have serv'd thee, and my wages now are paid, / Yet my worst punishment shall, I hope, be staid.'

As a murderer whose actions have led on to this double emblazoning of the female form, Frank has indeed served his audience well: the dead female cadaver of a 'guilty' 'whore' (Susan) has now twice been displayed before them. Not so remarkably, then, as this play concludes, Frank's wish is granted: he is not cut up but is *reconciled* to his family before being hanged. In the end, even the father of Frank's victim pardons the murderer and confesses: 'Go thy ways, I did not think to have shed one tear for thee, but thou hast made me water my plants spight of my heart'.

It is at this point (in what I want to posit as a moment of acceptance and reconciliation between the play's male characters) that Ford's narrative terminates. His butcher escapes the final punishment of evisceration – and the only figure to go under a stage-knife (and to have her body metaphorically 'scattered' by the male characters of this play) is its superlative innocent: Susan Carter.¹² The woman who was falsely condemned as a 'whore' and a 'slut' by both of the principal patriarchs of her life has been unjustly sentenced to death and has twice been forced to become the object of her husband's dissective attack. As we shall see, it is a pattern that will become all too familiar in Fordian tragedy

II

Upon first examination, Ford's *Broken Heart* displays an even more persistent, almost unfathomable, preoccupation with anatomical imagery (and this time with that which seems to concern itself overtly with the cardiovascular system). In a startling revelation of anatomical preoccupation, the first printed edition of this play (published in 1633) even provides an evocative variant spelling of the character who is now ubiquitously edited as *Lemophil*: in a slip that unambiguously links this courtier's name to the sanguine, the first quarto produces *Hemophil*[!] (up until sig. K2). Now (disregarding any obvious similarity to 'haemophiliac'), the prefix *hemo* that appears here is a common variant spelling of *hæmo* (from the hard-breathed Greek ἄιμο, itself a shortened form of ἄιματ, from ἄιμα – meaning blood) and this is consequently a typographical error that constitutes quite some blunder – especially considering that this play is set in Greece, and is one in which the principal male hero dies by being bled to death. Contextualising *The Broken Heart* against contemporaneous medical discourse, however, begins to explain some of this play's anatomical preoccupation – and some of the reasons why its corporal fixation was evidently conspicuous enough to distract even its first compositor.

I believe that better understanding *The Broken Heart*'s sanguine obsession comes with pinning it as firmly as possible to a date of initial production – and first performances of this play are suggested to have taken place at the Blackfriars in 1629.¹³ Even if this tentative date is erroneous, however, the play is certain to have been performed before *Love's Sacrifice* (for which Andrew Gurr suggests a production date of 1631[?]) and for which entry in the Stationer's Register was on 21st January 1633). Furthermore, Crashaw's epigram: "Thou cheat'st us Ford: mak'st one seem two by art: / What is Love's Sacrifice but The Broken Heart?" is reproduced in a manuscript whose contents are datable as not after 1634 (and the verse itself clearly indicates that *The Broken Heart* was the earlier of the two plays).¹⁴ We may therefore presume (and with a fair degree of certainty) that initial stagings of this play took place sometime between 1629 and 1632. Significantly then, this is a date that allows us to locate *The Broken Heart* at least a year (and at most three) after Harvey's initial publication of *de motu cordis* – and, significantly, this fact means that Ford's play was amongst the first dramatic works to be staged during the controversy over the true function of the heart that took place in medical (and, subsequently, intellectual) circles as a result of Harvey's radical treatise.

As I intend to demonstrate below, however, Ford's drama is far from a ratification of New Science's proto-Cartesian assertions; it is, instead, a highly charged, poetic and quasi-Paracelsian disavowal of almost everything that Harvey had sought to articulate. Because Ford's cardiac imagery is derived from antiquity, from Neo-Platonism and late-medieval physiology, his somatology is distinctly ante-Vesalian – and his figurations of the body are incontrovertibly non-Cartesian. The organ that anatomists (and philosophers) were seeking to wrestle away from divinity and were beginning to locate – for the very first time – as the central functional

component of the human biological 'machine' (and they were doing it precisely as Ford wrote this play) is consequently restored in Ford's dramatic text and reinstated as the microcosmographic core of divine human design.

The O.E.D defines the (now obsolete) term 'microcosmography' as 'the description of the 'microcosm' of man', and cites last use of the word as being made in 1628 (a date that has obvious significance to my inquiry); yet, for some reason, Ford's *Broken Heart* attempts to adhere to a deliberately *microcosmographic* frame of corporal reference – and, accordingly, sets the heart up as a mystical and polymorphous wonder that is represented as: the bodily seat of love (I.ii. 123/4)¹⁵, an organ capable of speech (I. iii 151), a muscle that may be removed from the body without the subject's death (III. iii. 55), an object that produces dust when milled (III.ii. 45), a part possessing the mental capacity to wish (IV.ii. 29), a spirit able to move from – or within – the human form (IV.ii. 130), a material to be paved over and trod upon (IV.iii. 131) and, finally, even a force that freezes at the moment of a subject's death (V.ii. 154). Veins are likewise described as vessels that are deemed capable of the political act of rebellion (II.ii. 118/9); and blood itself is represented as a substance that is like wine (V.ii.126), that may be excreted through the skin's pores in place of sweat (III.iii. 112),¹⁶ that is the propagatory currency of a dynastic hegemony (III.iv. 10-13),¹⁷ that is capable of transformation into the semi-precious mineral deposit amethyst (IV.ii. 130-31), and that eventually becomes 'polluted' through a subject's loss of a conceptual notion such as 'shame' (IV.ii.149-152). It may even signify a bad omen if it falls from the nose in three drops (V.i.13).

Clearly, we cannot know for sure the reasons why Ford chose to display such reactionary (indeed medieval) corporal views. Perhaps Catholic sentiments led him to subscribe to (or defend) Paracelsian and ante- (perhaps even anti-) Cartesian standpoints. Conceivably (and more straightforwardly) the language of poetic metaphor that was available to Ford obliged him to rest in the past – we still (after all) talk about the heart (at least figuratively) as if it were the 'brain' of the emotions and almost ubiquitously use it as an extended metaphor of anthropocentric romanticism. In any case (and in many ways), the *reason* for Ford's anatomical *retrospection* is in itself unimportant to my current project. What *is* of note, however, is that – once again – this writer seems to have chosen to capitalise upon the increasing fascination of a Private Theatre audience (and this time that of the Blackfriars) with the subjects of contemporaneous scientific debate concerning the body – and that he therefore peppered his first non-collaborative play with stagings of (and references to) anatomical and quasi-anatomical spectacle. Moreover, this anatomical fascination may once again be seen to play itself out in distinctly *gendered* terms.

Critics agree that the dramatic power of *The Broken Heart* comes not from its poetic *imagery* (couched though it may be in pre-Vesalian rhetoric), but rather from the bloody *spectacle* of its final, horrific, venesection. The ultimately visceral *dénouement* of Orgilus' phlebotomy is constructed with precision, and clearly satisfies any audience's desire for bloodthirsty anatomical

demonstration; yet what I want to argue is that Ford's spectacular *conclusion* to *The Broken Heart* came as no *surprise* to his early-modern spectators – and that Orgilus' decisive (dissective) dispatch is in actual fact *built up to* throughout most of this text's Imagery and action. Whether Ford's concluding scene is a visual manifestation of the act of anatomy itself 'breaking our hearts' (and therefore an emblem of New Science driving a stake into the organic unity of the human body – a violent symbol of the new philosophical desire to rip the metaphorically divine 'heart' from the centre of the human cosmos) is open to debate. That Ford's decision to include a sustained anatomical *build up* to his play's concluding venesection once more levied a significant (and demonstrable) price on the sexual politics of his drama is, however, unquestionable.

In section I of this chapter I have underscored the way in which anatomy seemed to be a distinctly gendered phenomena in *The Witch of Edmonton* (in that it appeared to be the case that dissection *could not* be undertaken on the body of a man in that play). What I now want to argue (in relation to *The Broken Heart*) is that – despite the fact that this play's concluding phlebotomy is undertaken on a male character – a similarly *gendered* figuration of the processes of anatomy is even more precisely delineated in Ford's first single-authored text.

As I have demonstrated above, in 1621 a 'joke' about the Barber-Surgeon's Hall established a direct link to anatomy early in the second scene of *The Witch of Edmonton*. Eight years later, in *The Broken Heart*, martial images (coming once again in the play's second scene) establish a subtext of dismemberment within which a distinct sexing of dissection is expressed. Groneas remarks to his lover:

Sweet Philema,
When I was in the thickest of mine enemies
Slashing off one man's head, another's nose
Another's arms and legs [...]
Then would I with a sigh remember thee [...]

(I. ii. 117–21)¹⁸

The pugilistic context of Groneas' recounted military exploits constitutes a further level to the sexing of dismemberment – because, whilst it might seem bizarre to us that such [e]visceral behaviour should suddenly prompt remembrance of an idealised female form, what I want to argue now is that Groneas' collapse of his enemy's dismembered corpse onto that of his female lover is neither superfluous nor coincidental – but rather that it forms part of a wider linguistic (and imagistic) nexus in which female corporality is consistently *emblazoned* (and in which subtextual frames of reference are repeatedly created that foreground dissective spectacle as a particularly *masculine* expression of violent – and particularly phallic – power).

Accordingly then, it is no *accident* that the violent Groneas – for whom we now know dismemberment apparently immediately brings beautiful women's bodies to mind – is present on stage with Bassanes in the scene during which the latter character expresses an intention to eviscerate his wife (as a result of her supposed incestuous infidelity (Act III scene ii)). Everything

about this scene sets Ford's audience up to expect some sort of anatomisation of Penthea: it opens with a song that contains dissective blazons that are intermingled with totems of female sexuality:

*Can you grasp a sigh? Or lastly,
Rob a virgin's honour chastely? [...]
Beauty's beauty, such a glory
As beyond all fate, all story,
All arms, all arts,
All loves, all hearts [...]*

Even the siblings who stand accused of incest seem themselves to be sub-textually complicit with the desire to anatomise Penthea that appears to exist in this scene; they signal her imminent dissection long before her husband's violent entry and, in the eighty or so lines prior to Bassanes' (second) arrival, Ithocles and his sister undertake a metaphorical display that slices Penthea up into her constituent 'womb [...] spleen [...] bosom [...] heart [...] tears [...] sweat [...] gall [...] finger [...] arms [...] eyes [...] and] brain' (III.ii. 34 – 116). Moreover, this is a dramatic unit in which Penthea compares *herself* to sacrificial 'bleating lambs' (III.ii. 56) and directly implores to be executed on three occasions (III.ii. 64, 67 and 75).

Furthermore, the name Penthea (being a Latin first declension feminine variant of the second declension masculine proper noun *Pentheus*) is itself another clue to this woman's imminent fate – because *Pentheus* (in mythology, the son of Agave and Echion) was the man who (after denying Dionysos' deity and forbidding worship of the god) went to spy on the Mænads – but was detected and torn to pieces in a dismembering act of *σπαραγμὸς* (*sparagmos*) by his mother and the other bacchic worshippers who saw him (with Agave – in her frenzy – taking her son for a beast and leading the attack).¹⁹

It is precisely such interwoven tapestries of classical precedent and dissective imagery that I want to argue tantalised Ford's up-market audiences with the *potentiality* of seeing one of this play's 'spotted whore[s]' (III.ii. 70) carved up before them on stage. I want to contend that it was by means of these subtle devices (staging the play in Greece and calling this character Penthea, putting Groneas on stage, emblazoning female anatomy in verse form at the top of the scene) that Ford's spectators were indubitably set up to expect that a furiously jealous Bassanes would actually dismember his wife – and when he finally *abandons* his intended vivisection, it is therefore only *after* both the boy actor playing Penthea and the actors playing 'her' husband and brother have all metaphorically reduced this feminine object to an 'anatomy' of her component parts – and Bassanes has also stood (for practically the entire latter half of the scene) with his phallic poniard (a weapon more akin to the instruments of dissection than any other available in the Caroline prop cupboard – and one with which he will finally incise Orgilus in Act V) drawn and ready to follow up this verbal with a physical evisceration.

Once again, I consider this dagger to be deeply significant – indeed, visual manifestation of this stage property (with all its phallic significance) is deemed so important that attention is thrice verbally drawn towards it by Penthea's old woman overseer, Grausis, who emphatically signs:

He holds a perilous weapon in his hand
To *prick* 'a cares not whom, nor where. See, see,
See!

(III. ii. 126 – 8 my italics)

The effect is complex; it undoubtedly creates an image in which male aggression and penetrative sex are conflated (a fact that is further underscored by Ford's choice of the verb to 'prick' here) – yet it is also a moment in which a subtle *destabilising* of the relative *safety* of anatomy (from the perspective of Ford's audiences at least) is also articulated. In this moment, I want to argue that the liminality of Ford's dissective voyeurism is pushed to its extremes – as the dramatist toys with the convention that visual pleasure is always derived from watching *aesthetic* representations of death in which it is the '*other*' who dies.

When Grausis calls out that Bassanes 'cares not whom' he attacks, there is a consequent *destabilising* of dissection that turns around the fact that an uncertainty immediately arises as to whether Bassanes' indifference might actually extend *beyond* the limits of his stage. There has already been one subtle transposition of a classical paradigm in this scene (in the Penthea / Pentheus switch): so do audience members shift uncomfortably in their seats at the sight of an overwrought Bassanes (who 'cares not whom' he 'pricks' as he 'stares / struts, puffs and sweats [in] Most admirable lunacy' (III.ii. 36-7))? Do they temporarily have the safety of spectatorship within conventional exemplars of the surgeon's hall *removed* from them as they remember Thomas Heywood's account of Caesar who, wrapped in the part of *Hercules Furens*, actually *slew* the actor playing the role of Lychus?²⁰ Might *this* actor leave his stage and actually eviscerate some member of his *audience*? Bassanes is a voyeur in this scene, his body must therefore be placed marginally on the stage – at its limits – both in order not to be seen himself (by Ithocles and Penthea) and to allow these characters to be seen (by their audience). Given the architecture of the Blackfriars, then, he must necessarily almost be *in* the audience at certain moments.

In *this* moment (in which the voyeuristic isolation and relative safety of the 'anatomical' spectator is temporarily removed), I want to argue that audience members are suddenly made aware of a possible attack on their *own* bodies – and that this scene therefore contains an extraordinarily powerful moment of 'moral vertigo' in which Ford's spectators could suddenly be made to *identify* with the *object* of dissection and – possibly for the first time – might actually *fear* the process. Ford thereby creates a short-lived opportunity for a profound *critique* of anatomy here; yet, for some reason, this moment of theatrical danger – in which Bassanes' apparent lunacy threatens *everybody* in his theatre – is swiftly controlled; because, through a final lack of resolution, the jealous husband ultimately relents from his proposed dissection.

Crucially, however, as Bassanes relieves his audience (and draws back from his threatened mutilation of *some-body* – *any-body* – in this auditorium), the discreet *gendering* of the act of anatomy is once again brought into play: *Because* he will *not* anatomise his wife, Bassanes is (significantly) seen to lose patriarchal control over Penthea – and his (concomitantly) evirate state leads him to proffer *himself* as the subject of dissection. Instead of anatomising Penthea, then, Bassanes instantly articulates the same plea that Ford's audiences had previously heard articulated (albeit in a less literal sense) by Frank Thorney: in a supplication that will become all too familiar in Ford, this frustrated husband now pleads:

Rip my bosom up,
I'll stand the execution with a constancy,
this torture is unsufferable.

(III.ii. 187 – 9)

Bassanes' lines tangibly link the *psychalgia* of uncertainty over what Kathleen McLuskie has termed "the gap between what is seen and what can be known about women"²¹ (in this case the knowledge about female sexual fidelity) to the actual *somatalgia* of dissective execution – and to an anatomical evisceration of this (particularly misogynistic) voyeur's thoracic cavity. Bassanes cannot bear the anguish of uncertainty concerning his wife's possible unfaithfulness and he consequently offers *himself* up for dissection. Significantly then, on a *symbolic* level, Bassanes accordingly becomes the metaphorical Pentheus of this scene and – as he does so – fleetingly corrects Ford's gendered reversal of his classical source. The point that I want to stress, therefore, is that in *gender* terms, Bassanes returns us to the unadulterated myth at this point – because, like his counterpart in the *Bacchæ* (and in other figurations of this story that were widely available in the Renaissance – such as the myths of Actæon and Orpheus), Bassanes now admits seeing woman in a light that he should not have (and here it is as an incestuous strumpet rather than as a hunter in a bathing pool, or as a frenzied dancer); he therefore senses the approaching (and almost inevitable) dismemberment of his *own* body and offers himself up to it; yet *crucially* (and in exactly the same manner that Ford had employed with Frank Thorney before him) this is a proposition that is almost instantly withdrawn.

And *this time* it is an older *female* figure, Grausis (who is herself possibly therefore paying atonement in a reversal of the role of the matriarch attacker, Agave) who intervenes. Upon hearing Bassanes' plea, this woman steps forward and assuages the danger to masculinity that has been prompted by Bassanes' anxious realisation. Significantly, she comforts Ford's tormented husband with the following words: 'Be of good cheer. She's your own flesh and bone' (III. ii. 199).

Ominously, then, Grausis' moderation of male anguish shifts the *focus* of everyone's anatomical attention back to the female body as – in an invocation of female objectivity that is now even supported by the language of biblical authority (flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone) Ford's metaphorical 'Pentheus' is accordingly once more rendered Penthea – and, *crucially*, male

evisceration is therefore *avoided* because Bassanes' damaged male ego is comforted by the knowledge that *any* woman can *always* be recast as male anatomical *property*. Put simply: a metaphorical objectification of Bassanes' *wife* avoids the need for corporal mutilation of the *male* body.

Interesting as this scene is, however, it is not simply in terms of dissection that Ford's references to anatomical science objectify the female body in *The Broken Heart*. Even a sub-unit as apparently innocuous Calantha's dance scene provides some evidence of Ford's knowledge of the heart's function in relation to the circulation of the blood; yet these anatomical facts are (once again) used to control (and gender) the play's representations of femininity.

As the princess' heart races after hearing, in quick succession, of the deaths of her father, of Penthea and of Ithocles, Calantha commands musicians to match the tempo of their music to that of her adrenaline stimulated cardiac muscle:

Strike up more sprightly.
Our footings are not active like our heart,
Which treads the nimbler measure. (V. ii 17 – 19)

After her subsequent dancing Calantha reveals an understanding that her accelerated *motu cordis* has a direct relation on the provision of blood to her skin:

So, let us breathe a while. Hath not this motion
Raised fresher colour on your cheeks? (V. ii. 20 – 21)

Yet Nearchus' reply brings a scientific phenomenon back once more to simple objectification of the female body:

Sweet princess,
A perfect purity of blood enamels
The beauty of your white. (V. ii. 21 – 23)²²

Admittedly, there is no actual staged evisceration of the female body in *The Broken Heart* and the two passages that do present *bona fide* stagings of evisceration and venesection come in the deaths of two males: Ithocles (IV. iv) and Orgilus (V.ii.). As I hope to have demonstrated in my analysis of Penthea's metaphorical emblazonment above, however, the *build up* to *The Broken Heart*'s two anatomical dispatches reveals a significant amount about the gendering of Ford's 'dramatic anatomies'.

Whilst I therefore do not consider that the murder of Ithocles and the execution of Orgilus function in the sexing of anatomy *per se*, I still consider that they are worthy of brief note here as part of the general anatomical framework within which all of Ford's tragedies appear to operate – and not least because *The Broken Heart* contains a murder and an execution that reveal much

about the spectacular *opportunities* for staged evisceration and venesection that were apparently available to Ford on the Private Theatre stages of early-modern London. Before I return to the Phoenix, then (and shift my attention to Ford's next plays for that space: *Love's Sacrifice* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* – plays in which women are cut up), I want to spend a short while looking at the *potential* for anatomical spectacle that is implied by the two death scenes of *The Broken Heart*.

Ithocles' murder features the use of an 'engine' to hold his body and prevent his escape from Orgilus' tortures. It is a prop that performs a dual function. Whilst reminiscent of torture, it also fulfils a distinctly *clinical* purpose as a surgical restraint. The language that surrounds Ithocles' entrapment is unambiguous in this regard: as Orgilus unveils the instrument with which he will dispatch Ithocles we hear:

Orgilus. Behold thy fate, this steel.

Ithocles. Strike home. A courage
As keen as thy revenge shall give it welcome.
But prithee faint not. If the wound close up,
Tent it with double force, and search it deeply [...]

(IV. iv. 139–42)

Two points are of immediate note from Ithocles' lines here: firstly, the fact that Orgilus calls the incisive instrument with which he will dispatch Ithocles 'steel' – disregarding the plethora of alternatives that were available to him (weapon, poniard, dagger, blade or point were *all* commonly used in Caroline drama, yet are all rejected).²³ Would Ford's audience have been aware that larger surgical instruments (such as those used for deep incisions) were, almost uniquely, cast in steel?²⁴ Perhaps – and this is language to which Ford will turn again. Secondly, Ithocles himself seems to understand the surgical sub-text of Orgilus' reference – because he immediately responds to it with an equally clinical vocabulary. The OED defines his, now archaic, transitive verb *to tent* as:

to probe, to treat by means of a tent; to apply a tent to (a wound etc., also to a person); to plug with a tent.

and the substantive, *tent*, as:

Late Middle English. [- Old French. *tente*, form of *tenter*:- Latin *temptare* touch, feel, try, TEMPT.] 1. A probe – 1693. 2. A roll or pledget, usually of soft absorbent material, often medicated, formerly much used to search and cleanse a wound, or to keep open or distend a wound, sore or natural orifice. Late Middle English.

Both Ithocles' verb and its root therefore belong to the language of seventeenth-century surgery.²⁵ So why should this character call such dissective-torture on himself?

Well, I think that, whilst on a *literal* level Ithocles is goading Orgilus on to make his attack as deep and violent as possible (out of spite and a desire to die quickly), on a *metaphorical* level, this character is referring to the investigative probing and tenting of anatomy itself – and is

therefore instructing both his 'anatomist' (Orgilus) and his *audience* not to be contented with any superficial examination; not to be discouraged by the bloodshed that it will produce, but to proceed to the end of their dissective inquiry: to continue the 'heart' of the matter (a sentiment that is also clearly analogous to the metaphorical inquiries of this play itself). With these words, then, Ithocles asks Orgilus to stretch his incision open, to go as wide (and as deep) as he can in order to reveal the goal of all of Ford's staged anatomy – to cut deeply in order to reveal both the play's and Ithocles' *heart*.

In the subsequent death of Orgilus, we finally witness the anatomical spectacle for which spectators have been waiting. Just as Ithocles had been, so is Orgilus restrained and tied before his bloodletting is enacted. The request to 'bind fast' (V.ii. 101) his arms is responded to with: 'quick fillet both his arms' (V.ii. 109). Now, this is a further instance of surgical vocabulary (since to *fillet* is defined by the OED as 'to bind with or as with a fillet ,1604' and its substantive *fillet*: 'A strip of any material suitable for binding; a band or bandage, 1601' – the footnote to the Revels edition also acknowledges a surgical inference and glosses *fillet* with: 'bind with a narrow strip (fillet) of cloth, as in surgery'.²⁶

It may be inferred from stage directions such as: *Enter Duke, his sword in one hand, and in the other a bloody dagger* (*Love's Sacrifice* sig. K3^v), from a character arriving in the dramatic space 'trimmed in reeking blood' (*'Tis Pity She's a Whore* V. vi. 9), or by repeated reference to the 'terrible bloody point' of a knife (*The Witch of Edmonton* IV. i. 169), that some substantial quantity of stage blood was available for use in Ford's theatres;²⁷ yet the stage business must have been extraordinarily elaborate that provided for the 'bubbling' (V.ii.107) out of Orgilus' blood that (if we are to take the scene's imagery at face value) 'sparkles like a lusty wine new broached' (l. 125) and pours out like a 'fountain' (l. 149) until the character is deemed to be 'bloodless' (l. 157) and is finally removed from the stage. This actor's body would, presumably also, have had to have been placed in a prominent position as well – since the scene is the dramatic climax to the play and the problems (and frustrations) caused by masking such a death would have been immense.

Although there is no stage direction for the opening of Orgilus' first vein, we may presume that it follows the lines: 'Thus I show cunning / In opening of a vein too full, too lively.' (l. 121 – 2). The last drop of theoretical (or, as I am arguing, *actual*) stage blood may be said to fall with: 'Thus he totters / Life's fountain is dried up.' (l. 148 – 9) or with the stage direction [*He*] *dies* (l. 154). The intervening period leaves a bleeding period of between twenty-eight and thirty-three lines (or one to one-and-a-half minutes of stage time). If this was to be cheated or faked – and audiences denied the *sight* of some substantial amount of real stage blood (that was normally obtained from pig carcasses) pumping from the structure supporting Orgilus (and I think that this is largely *why* the structure is there) – Ford would have had to have had good thematic reason for including such a difficult staging prospect.

Before I move on the murder of female characters in Ford's two last tragedies, then, I simply want to draw attention here to the fact that the two principal death scenes of Ford's *Broken Heart* appear to illustrate the fact that the dramatist did not shy away from difficult stagings of extraordinarily sanguine spectacle – and that, rather than recoiling from the intricate mechanics of staged evisceration and bloodshed, he actually appears to have revelled in them.

III

With *Love's Sacrifice*, in 1631, Ford returned to the Phoenix. The play, unsurprisingly, displays more of the Neo-platonic and Paracelsian somatization to which audiences had become accustomed in *The Broken Heart* – its imagery is equally preoccupied with anatomy; its language as littered with references to medieval and early-Renaissance figurations of corporality.

Colona, for example (a minor female character and daughter to the counsellor of state Petruchio), speaks of having a 'heart of flint' (sig. C1^r) – a biological impossibility that is later echoed by Fernando, who decries Bianca's 'too stony breast' (sig. E4^v). Like Bassanes in *The Broken Heart*, Fernando deems bodily fluids capable of instigating rebellion – and refers to the possession of an 'unruly faction in [his] blood' (sig. C2^r) – it is a physiological (rather than psychological) affliction that supposedly dictates his behaviour and causes him to betray friendship in the way that a medieval sanguine complexion might.²⁸ Elsewhere, the Duke's sister Fiormonda admits the possibility of her blood freezing in a living body (as it also apparently had around Orgilus' dying heart), and implores Fernando: 'looke here, my bloud is not yet freez'd, / Cold are my sighs, but feelee, my lips are warme' (sig. C3^v); the possibility of such 'frozen blood' continuing to course through a subject's veins is even subsequently articulated by Philippo Caraffa – the Duke of Pavy himself – who replaces Cartesian logic with Petrarchan paradox and complains:

The ycie current of my frozen blood
Is kindled up in Agonies as hot
As flames of burning sulphure. (sig. G4^v)

More startlingly perhaps, as Fernando falls in love with the Duke's wife, Bianca, his audience are led to understand that his heart has quite literally left his body (and that his soul has consequently also departed) because he confesses:

Thus bodies walk unso[u]ld; mine eyes but followes [sic]
My heart entomb'd in yonder goodly shrine:
Life without her, is but death's subtill snares,
And I am but a Coffin to my cares. (sig. D1^r)

Now, this was a fashionable conceit in Elizabethan literature and may be evidenced in Sir Phillip Sidney's mid-Elizabethan sonnet 45 [*Charita*] from *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*:

My true love hath my hart, and I have his,
 By just exchange, one for the other giv'ne.
 I holde his deare, and myne he cannot misse:
 There never was a better bargaine driv'ne.
 His hart in me, keepes me and him in one,
 My hart in him, his thoughtes and senses guides:
 He loves my hart, for once it was his owne,
 I cherish his, because in me it bides [...] ²⁹

It is also a trope that was later echoed in Donne's *Broken Heart* :

What did become
 Of my heart, when I first saw thee?
 I brought a heart into the roome
 But from the roome, I carried none with mee:
 If it had gone to thee, I know
 Mine would have taught thine heart to show
 More pitty unto mee: but Love, alas,
 At one first blow, did shiver it as glasse [...] ³⁰

but it was surely somewhat *outmoded* as a corporal metaphor by 1631 (and is certainly a figure that deliberately runs counter to the grain of contemporaneous scientific discovery). From such a perspective, then, what is perhaps *more* interesting about Fernando's trope, is the fact that it creates an image of a hollow, soulless and 'coffin-like' body – a representation in which the plucking of an internal organ (and in this case the heart) has led to a living-dead-like existence for a subject who is separated from the 'goodly shrine' in which his heart rests – and that it is therefore a figuration that has an extraordinary resonance in relation to the moral implications of the extractive processes that were intrinsic to anatomical dissection.

In one last intriguing example of Ford's mounting obsession with the extra-corporal heart, the comic figure Mauruccio devises a unique conceit in which the externalised organ of Sidney and the mirror of Donne are contrived to meet. Mauruccio decides to fashion a self-portrait (that he intends to present to his love, the Lady Fiormonda), in which image he determines that :

In my bosome on my left side, I will have a leafe
 of blood red crimson velvet (as it were part of my
 doublet) open; which being open', *Giacopo*, (now marke)
 I will have a cleare and most transparent Crystall in the
 forme of a heart [...]

which crystal-heart will be used by Fiormonda as a mirror so that she may:

behold the excellence of her excellencies beauty, in the
 prospective and mirror, as it were, in my heart.

(sig. D2^{r/v})

It is an image that brings us straight back to Donne:

Yet nothing can to nothing fall,
 Nor any place be empty quite,
 Therefore I think my breast hath all
 Those peeces still, though they be not unite;
 And now as broken glasses show
 A hundred lesser faces, so

Yet, despite Ford's obvious (and continuing) play with the poetic traditions of the previous half-century (or even his trope's function in the manifestation of Mauruccio's own corporal interiority), it should also be observed that this is a figure that primarily serves to frame up an objectifying aspect of femininity (and this time Fiormonda's beauty) within a specifically *masculine* anatomical context: the metaphor fashions female attractiveness as a *reflection* that is rebounded (and held) in Mauruccio's heart. It is consequently a device that both entraps and contains this woman as a prisoner within the male body.

So then, given that anatomical imagery once more abounds in this play, where was Ford *going* with all of these romanticised blazons and figures – and what might the dramatic motivations *behind* them have been? Do they (once again) serve to delineate a 'corporal backdrop' against which the gendered phenomenality of dissection could be offset (as I have now argued to have been the case in *The Witch of Edmonton* and *The Broken Heart*)?

Well, answer to this question would again appear to come quickly – because within only a few scenes of the start of *Love's Sacrifice* its tragic hero, Fernando, has informed his audience of:

[...] a soule
So anchor'd downe with cares in seas of woe,
That passion, and the vowes I owe to you [the Duke's
wife, Bianca]
Have changed me to a lean *Anatomy*[...] (sig. D3^r)

Clearly (since we are once again in the Phoenix), the 'lean anatomy' to which Fernando refers inevitably calls the emaciated cadavers of the Barber Surgeons' Hall back to mind; and consequently, as this dejected lover attempts to persuade Bianca of his (paradoxically) 'chaste desires' in the language of Burtonian melancholy, the voyeuristic motivations behind Ford's linguistic choices once more begin to emerge – as he reveals this play's need for anatomical evisceration.

Now, what I want to argue is that, in moments such as this, characters like Fernando both *acknowledge* and *play upon* their audience's desire to see human interiority (as well as to hear about it) – and that, whilst Ford's general corporal imagery (and, in particular, the examples that I have referred to above) *satisfies* their desire to have the body *alluded* to (or metaphorically *troped* as an 'anatomy' of constituent parts), it also, unavoidably, tantalizes them and actively manufactures a demand to *witness* some sort of concrete manifestation of the bodies that are constantly being metaphorically anatomised: hence, that it sets up or augments a desire to *observe* some sort of anatomical *spectacle*.

This, I would argue, is largely why Fernando immediately promises to Bianca (in a comment that is, I think, intended as much for his spectators as it is for her), that (like Frank Thorney and Bassanes before him) he intends to have his body cut up – and that he will therefore:

lay before your [meaning both his audience and Bianca's] feet
In lowest vasslage, the bleeding heart [...]
(sig. E4^r)

The point is made all the more clear by the fact that the mechanics of this spectacle are not left up to audiences' imaginations – because, subsequent to his declaration of love and invocation of a 'lean anatomy', Fernando almost immediately presages the violent extraction, dissection and detailed inspection of the contents of his thoracic cavity; he promises:

If when I am dead you rip
This coffin of my heart *there you shall read*
With constant eyes, what now my tongue defines,
Bianca's name carved out in bloody lines.
(sig. F1^r)

As one might expect, however (given what has already been demonstrated in Ford), this anatomical threat does not hang over the *male* body for long – and it is only left until the following scene for the biological sex of Ford's anatomical object to be hurriedly transposed.

This time, the Duke of Pavy's chaste and faithful wife, Bianca, is inexplicably turned *volte-face* and, after thus far denying Fernando's advances (and *thrice* admonishing his sexual treachery), she now inexplicably steals into her husband's best friend's bedchamber, declares her undying love for Fernando and agrees to sleep with him. Significantly, however, the *price* of this transgressive act is immediately outlined as this woman's *own* dissection – and, at this moment, Bianca is accordingly made both to satisfy male sexual desire (in agreeing to sleep with Fernando) and to avert the threat to masculine corporality that has been set up by Fernando's sado-masochistic call for evisceration. Bianca's surrogacy is made abundantly clear by the fact that she appropriates her lover's request for violent dissection by means of a quotation of Fernando's own lines verbatim (save the necessary exchange of their Christian names); she therefore declares:

If when I am dead you rip
This coffin of my heart *there you shall read*
With constant eyes, what now my tongue defines,
Fernando's name carved out in bloody lines.

In what is beginning to emerge as a disturbing pattern, then, the focus of this play's corporal voyeurism has once again been shifted back to the female body and – despite (in principle) remaining entirely faithful and chaste throughout the play – subsequent to this scene, Bianca consequently begins to be set up (by practically every other character in the play) as a 'strumpet' whose anatomy (and principally whose *womb*) will be laid bare to her audience – who evidently wish to see the dissection of this 'harlot', whose 'unsatiate and more than goatish abomination'

has been 'taught to catch / The easy fancies of young prodigal bloods In springes of her stew-instructed art' (sig. H2^v).

Intriguingly, then, two things appear to be happening: firstly (and as I have demonstrated above) there has once again been a subtle switch in the sex of the *object* of Ford's 'anatomie'; but *secondly*, there has also been a shift in the biological *focus* of all of this dissection. Despite Bianca's express desire to have her thoracic cavity eviscerated (and to show both Fernando and her audience her heart – a symbol of her love), it is now this woman's *womb* – as the voracious gorging of masculinity (in the form, presumably, of semen – and a symbol of her rapacious *sexuality*) – that has become the focus of Ford's anatomical inquiry. Free-floating female libido (or sexual desire that is not associated with a sociologically circumscribed function in relation to the male – such as childbirth or mothering) accordingly becomes the essence of Bianca's deviant (biological, female) threat – and her womb must consequently be made manifest to her audience.

In order to make this point about Bianca's 'anatomy' of sexual deviance abundantly clear, D'Avolos demands of a distinctly fertile female character, Julia:

what tho thou have a child or perhaps two? [...] is that such a matter? I like thee the better for't it shewes thou hast a good tenant-able and fer-tile wombe, worth twenty of your barren, dry, bloodlesse devourers of youth [...]

(sig. I2^r)

As soon as Bianca has drawn anatomical attention away from Fernando's male body, then (and has set herself up as the obvious target for this play's imminent evisceration), the object of Ford's anatomical interest shifts away from Fernando's 'heart' to what emerges as Bianca's rapacious and all devouring 'womb'. D'Avolos accordingly (and repeatedly) draws his audiences' attention to the 'deviant' nature of women who engage in sexual pleasure without the intention of supplying legitimate offspring, together with the function of their wombs in this process.

In a speech that metaphorically guides his (on and off-stage) audiences from an abstract concept such as faith in a friend, through a metaphorical manifestation of Bianca's external pudenda (what he sets up as the 'open[ing]' of her 'passage') and, subsequently, along the channel of her uterus to a womb that is hungry for a friend's semen, D'Avolos accordingly reminds his master (the Duke) that 'trust' is: 'a key / To open the passage to your own wives [sic] womb.' Indeed, it is D'Avolos' troping of Bianca's insatiable womb that provokes the Duke to respond with his first threat of evisceration – and, therefore, to promise his audience that female reproductive biology will soon be punished somehow as a result of his wife's (supposed) transgression (an action that he first undertakes by threatening the nearest female to him).

This deviant organ will be spectacularly displayed – come what may – and the Duke therefore warns his machiavellian-sister (who is writ-large in his Duke-baiting scene) that even if he is being fooled into action by her malice:

[...] were the lives
 Of father, mothers, children, or the hearts
 Of all our Tribes in thine, I would unrip
 That wombe of bloody mischief with these nayles,
 Where such a cursed plot as this was hatched.

(sig. H 3^r)

As any audience of *Love's Sacrifice* know, however, Caraffa's promised punishment of female reproductive biology ends not with his sister, but with his chaste wife and – in a process that is contingent to that set up for the dispatch of Susan in *The Witch of Edmonton* – Bianca's murder is represented not as the impassioned violence of ripping nails, but rather as a decidedly clinical process. Significantly, however, *this* time it is also supposedly legitimised by the due processes of law.

In the Duke's assassination of Bianca, Ford sets out a metaphorical framework that I consider to be deliberately structured as an emulation of the passage of a female felon's body through judgement and execution – so that Bianca can subsequently undergo a final (if only metaphorical) transportation to the anatomy hall. In other words, that Bianca's body is subject to a verdict and quasi-legal dispatch so that its ultimate use can be a justifiably demonstrative revelation of its deviant female biology – and the Duke (as a symbol of Pavy's patriarchal authority) fulfils all three of these functions himself.

Deliberately constructed as the supreme power of his own 'court', this man has the jurisdiction to act as judge and to condemn an 'adulterous' Bianca and Fernando to death; yet the difficulty of uniting revenge-murder with the notion of legally executing condemned prisoners (and the dramatic involvedness of using just one character to do it) is made abundantly clear as the Duke bursts in on the 'lovers' in the Duchess's bedchamber in order to perform the next of his three functions.

Despite what is happening being obvious to all who are present (both on and off stage), Ford is consequently obliged to write in the following exchange:

Duke. Know you who I am

Fer. Yes; Th'art Pavy's Duke
 Drest like a hangman[...]

(sig. 14^r)³²

Exactly what (if any) costuming was used to re-inscribe the Duke's (sexualised) revenge murder within the boundaries of a culturally sanctioned 'execution' is unclear, but that a quasi-legal context of authority, discipline and punishment is evidently needed prior to the Duke informing Bianca of his intention to:

Rip up the Cradle of thy cursed wombe,
 In which the mixture of that Traytor's lust
 Impostumes for a birth of bastardy [...]

(sig. K1^r)

would seem to be clear. The point that I want to stress is twofold: firstly, Fernando's reference to a 'hangman' (and the spectre of the Duke as an officially 'dressed' executioner) attempts to play down the concept of revenge and underscores the notion of 'justice' that Ford is working with here (for the Duke enters brandishing a sword – and yet he is somehow transposed into a 'hangman'); and secondly, the fascination with displaying an essentially *female* biological process: gestation (together with the organ that encloses it) that is implicit in this scene hints at the third (and final) role that the Duke will metaphorically play in all of this: that of the anatomist.

The Duke and his audience have already been informed by D'Avolos of the exact process that is creating a foetus inside Bianca. In the language of conception and gestation that might well have been drawn from the sort of anatomical treatises with which I began this dissertation D'Avolos has told them:

[...] there's the mischiefe, Sir:
In the meane time you shall bee sure to have a bastard,
(of whom you did not so much as beget a little toe, a left
eare, or half the further side of an upper lip).
(sig. H2^v)

As a result of this fact, the principal reason for the ripping out of Bianca's womb to be staged (or even alluded to) at this point, would therefore appear to be a need for some kind of metaphorical (or ocular) *proof* that will satisfy both the Duke *and* his audience as to this process. As the Duke prepares to kill Bianca, then, he first makes her confess her transgression and then bears down in order to 'execute' her with a sword; yet, what is astounding about this murder is that – even as Caraffa stirs to run his wife through with a drawn weapon – the following passage ensues:

Duke.	Prepare to die.
Bian.	I, doe; and to the point Of thy sharp sword, with open breast I'll runne Halfe way thus naked [...]
Duke	Not this I'll none of this: 'tis not so fit: <div style="text-align: right;">[casts away his sword]</div> Why should I kill her? She may live and change Or – [...] <div style="text-align: right;">(sig. K2^v)</div>

As Bianca confesses her guilt, she proffers an erotically uncovered bosom for her husband's violent penetration; she therefore makes his intended incision into her chest (and access to her thoracic cavity) easy; yet (and for no tangible reason) Caraffa suddenly relents and throws his sword aside.

Fiormonda subsequently spurs the Duke on to attack again and (somewhat conveniently) having no weapon other than his dagger to hand in his fury, Filippo Caraffa, Duke of Pavy, finally incises his Duchess with Ford's (now ubiquitous) phallic instrument of (much more *anatomical*) dispatch:

Thus goe in everlasting sleepe to dwell:

[draws his poniard and stabs her]

here's blood for lust, & lacrifice [sic] for wrong [...]

(sig. K3^r)

As in *The Witch of Edmonton* and *The Broken Heart*, the weapon that is chosen for the final execution of this play's principal 'transgressor' is the smaller, more precise and more clinical poniard. As Bianca dies, she reminds her audience of the organ that she would like to lie at the centre of this scene. With an eroticised (almost orgasmic) exhalation of breath she gives her 'heart' not to her metaphorical anatomist, but to another man:

Ny [sic] Tragedy to thee, my heart to – to –
Fernand – oo oh [...]

[dies]

(sig. K3^r)

I would assert that Bianca's gifting of her heart to Fernando is not as disturbing as all that to her husband, however (and hence Caraffa's earlier rejection of her willingly offered breast). What this man is much more interested in at this moment is his wife's lower belly. Caraffa's anatomical object is his wife's womb; and it is *this* final goal, I would argue, that dictates the point of his first incision into her body.

IV

As in the texts thus far encountered, the organs of the anatomised body (and specifically the heart and womb) form the principal unit of metaphorical currency in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Ford's last tragedy, however, displays the strongest disparity in its treatment of male and female corporalities that is to be found anywhere in his drama: if men are represented as discrete physical entities in this play, then women are (almost ubiquitously) represented by allusion to single, isolated (and typically reproductive) organs. It is a discrepancy that first arises in the twenty-eighth line of the play (when Giovanni comments on his parentage: 'Say we had one *father*, say one *womb* / (Curse to my joys) gave us both life and birth [...]' (I.i. 28 – 29. My italics))³³ and continues until Hippolita's dying curse to Soranzo finally reduces Annabella – like her mother before her – to a simple womb ('Mayst thou live / To father bastards, may her womb bring forth / Monsters [...]' (IV. ii. 96-98)).

This brace of couplets are the boundaries of a dramatic time and space within which Ford reiterates an understanding of the male body as discrete, whole and human – an entity that is given sociologically comprehensible name tags that are demonstrative of its capacity for duty, thought and action (they are 'husbands' or 'fathers') – yet in which the female body is reduced to representation as a metaphorically (and eventually literally) excised body part (it is a 'womb', a 'face' and finally a single, bloody 'heart'). Once again, then, within this anatomical framework,

femininity is only considered according to its function in relation to an autonomous male whole. As a result, in both Giovanni and Hippolita's biological world, active *human* male fathers inseminate isolated, passive, female *organs*.

In the private worlds within this play the reasons behind this reductive objectification of the female body quickly emerge – and an overwhelming sense of 'woman as rapacious womb' once more divulges male insecurity, anxiety and paranoia concerning the unregulated reproductive processes of a newly autonomous biological sex (much as I think it did in *Love's Sacrifice*). Indeed, male apprehension about the suffocating nature of female sexual anatomy is set up so insistently in this text that Soranzo – in his private, domestic world – is entirely submerged by a biological figuration of femininity. He exclaims to his wife Annabella: 'How hast thou mocked my hopes and in the shame / Of thy lewd womb even buried me alive.' (IV. ii. 112 -13). In the bravado of a masculine-controlled public space, however, Soranzo's fears of engulfing female anatomy are quelled by mannish bravado – and the same woman, in order to be ostensibly mastered, is reduced to a flayed by-product of dissection. Before their servant (Vasques) Soranzo is therefore consequently quick to attenuate Annabella to an elliptical handful of stripped tissue: 'Oh Vasques, Vasques, in this piece of flesh, / This faithless face of hers, had I laid up / The treasure of my heart [...]' (IV. iii. 106 – 8).

Following on from the metaphorical anatomisations of Susan, Penthea and Bianca in the plays that I have analysed above, a pattern quickly emerges in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in which Annabella is also repeatedly subjected to metaphorical dissection (in the form of the extended blazon) by her dramatic patriarchs – and this comes long before she is subjected to an actual physical evisceration at the hands of her brother, Giovanni. Thus Florio comments to Soranzo:

My Lord Soranzo, this is strange to me,
Why you should storm having my word engaged:
Owing [owning] her heart, what need you doubt her ear?
(I. ii 52 – 54)

In the 'wooing' scene between the two siblings, Giovanni employs an exemplary neo-Petrarchan blazon tradition in order to reduce the totality of Annabella's body to the accustomed assemblage of forehead, eyes, cheeks, lips and hands ... :

I read,
That Juno for her forehead did exceed
All other goddesses: but I durst swear
Your forehead exceeds hers, as hers did theirs.
Such a pair of stars
As are thine eyes would, like Promethean fire,
If gently glanced, give life to senseless stones.
The lily and the rose, most sweetly strange,
Upon your dimpled cheeks do strive for change.
Such lips would tempt a saint; such hands as those
Would make an anchorite lascivious.'

(I. ii. 186 – 97)

'Diana', to quote Nancy Vickers, is indeed being 'scattered' here.³⁴ Giovanni (like an Actæon, Orpheus and Pentheus) sees beauty where he should not (and here it is in the body of a sister rather than in the icy waters of a bathing pool) and yet, captivatingly, what follows on from this dissective *literary* process (Giovanni's inventory of anatomical signifiers that reduces Annabella's feminine beauty into its parts, members and organs – and is therefore supposed to be an attempt to save the male from his own imminent dismemberment) is an immediate, impassioned request for Giovanni's own *literal* evisceration – and the subsequent close examination of his own internal organs.

Giovanni, (offering Ford's ubiquitous dissective dagger and appropriating the same image that we have now seen to be used by Frank Thorney, Fernando and Bassanes before him) also finds a Petrarchan literary trope inadequate protection – and therefore implores his sister to dissect him:

[...] here's my breast, strike home
Rip up my bosom, there thou shalt behold
A heart in which is writ the truth I speak.

(I. ii. 205 – 7)

Significantly then, despite dissecting his sister metaphorically, Giovanni is established as yet *another* parallel to the classical figures who Vickers has asserted 'transgress, see women who are not to be seen [or in ways in which they are not to be seen], and are torn to bits'.

In reference to the poets Gascoigne, Davies and Donne, Sawday has likened this 'sodomasochistic surrender to the metaphorical anatomist's knife' to a 'Petrarchan game of self abasement before the beloved object which was so much in vogue in the sonnet sequences of the late sixteenth century.'³⁵ The point that I want to make, however, is that *Giovanni's* suggestion, (being *dramatic* rather than poetic – and therefore possibly leading on to a teleological *completion* of this dissective action *in front of* his theatrical audience) is surely far beyond any but the worst of self-abuser's notions of 'play.' It sets up an expectation that this man will actually meet with some kind of [e]visceral end.

However, the eventual object of this play's dissection quickly becomes ambiguous when blazon techniques are again employed, and Giovanni recounts to the Friar:

View well her face, and in that little round
You may observe a world of variety:
For colour, lips; for sweet perfumes, her breath;
For jewels, eyes; for threads of purest gold,
Hair; for delicious choice of flowers, cheeks [...]
Hear but her speak, and you will swear the spheres
Make music to the citizens in Heaven [...]

(II. v. 49 – 56)

an anatomy to which the monk responds:

The more I hear, I pity thee the more,

That one so excellent should give those parts
All to a second death.

(II. v 59 – 61. My italics)

Now the language here is ambiguous; these lines bring an audience back to the threat of dissection that Giovanni has earlier raised before his sister (and they are also reminiscent of the ambiguity of Thorney's 'worst punishment'). For what is 'a second death'?³⁶ Damnation for *both* of these characters? Well, yes – that is certainly one literal interpretative spin that we could put on Friar Bonaventura's words (because that was believed to be the divine punishment for incest in the period); but, alternatively, the Friar's lines could also be read as signifying that *Annabella* – the female subject of all of this *metaphorical* emblazonment – is *also* a woman whose cadaver will succumb to the literal second 'death' of actual anatomical evisceration (a sub-text that is surely reinforced by all of the 'poetic' anatomising that Annabella is undergoing at this point as *well* as by the conclusion to its narrative that is to come). Moreover, these two interpretations are not mutually exclusive, because, according to developments in Protestant theology and law, once the body had been judged, its soul *could* be condemned to damnation for the act of incest – yet *still* leave its vacant corporal host open to the anatomist

The point that I want to make is that *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is lavish with sub-textual references to anatomy that augment and foreshadow its ultimately dissective intentions. Like the linear teleology of Giovanni's sexual desire, the narrative outcome of this play is simple and unavoidable (and its object is, likewise, easy to ascertain). Consequently, when Florio announces Richardetto's arrival (in disguise as a Doctor in order to ascertain the truth about his wife Hippolita), for example, Ford chooses to have his fake physician arrive hot from *Padua*:

look, I have brought you company here's one,
A learned Doctor lately come from Padua,
Much skilled in Physic.

(II. I. 53 – 5)

A coincidence? or poor geography? Well perhaps, yet this is a fluke that labours the point that a 'learned Doctor' has travelled over 140 kilometres in order to reach the play's fictional setting of *Parma*. So why include such a needless reference to Padua if not to capitalise upon the reputation of the city (and University) at which Vesalius, Fallopius, and Columbus had all lectured, at which Harvey had *himself* been a medical student from 1599 (following matriculation from Gonville and Caius College medical school in 1597) and that was *above all* famous for its *anatomy syllabus*?³⁷

Moreover, Giovanni adheres to a Neo-platonic and Paracelsian view of the relationship between the mind and the body that might well have been articulated by Doctors of that Catholic city. His views are certainly directly at odds with Cartesian 'New Science':

It is a principle (which you have taught
When I was yet your scholar), that the frame
And composition of the mind doth follow
The frame and composition of the body:

So where the body's furniture is beauty,
The mind's must needs be virtue.

(II. v. 14 – 19)

What is remarkable in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, however, is that its references to anatomy go far beyond the poetic use of the blazon, ante-Cartesian figurations of the body, or references to 'second deaths' or 'worst punishments' that are eventually aborted in all but metaphorical senses. As I intend to demonstrate, the anatomy of this play even goes beyond that of Orgilus' venesection and Bianca's ambiguous dispatch.

No critic has argued that audiences of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* are not led to expect some sort of sanguine finalé. Appetites are consistently whetted with the promise of a bloody conclusion to the play's incest (largely as a result of Vasques plot to murder Giovanni). This shady character commands his banditti: 'Be sure, my masters to be / Bloody enough [...]' (IV. II. 2 – 3), and Soranzo also informs his spectators both that: 'blood shall quench' his anger (V. IV. 27) and that 'blood / is fired in swift revenge.' (IV. III. 150). Further augmenting the play's spiralling acceleration towards a sanguine finale are the facts that Annabella's letter to her brother is written in blood (V.I. 34 and V. III. 32) and that, when Putana is removed, it is to have her eyes gouged out and her nose slit.

Despite such intense premonitory undercurrents, however, critics have often argued that nothing prepares an audience for Annabella's murder and Giovanni's (almost immediate) arrival at the banquet 'with [her] heart upon his dagger.' It is a thematic *dénouement* that has been argued to come from 'nowhere', thereby making the tragedy 'flawed', 'forced', 'sensational' and 'melodramatic'.³⁸

Given the context of the sort of metaphorical anatomies that I have now shown to run not just throughout this play, but through virtually all of Ford's dramatic *œuvre* (together with the prospect that his theatre benefited from the fact that it was a well-known, alternative, *theatrum anatomicum*) I am about to argue that nothing could be further from the truth – because what I want to contend, in my conclusion to this dissertation, is that *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* forms the climax of Ford's 'Theatre of Blood.' In the light of her incestuous transgression of the moral order, the execution of Annabella (and the punishment of her corpse by physical evisceration) is the logical conclusion to the sort of metaphorical dissections that have been undertaken throughout the previous decade of Ford's career. So, if it is half expected, how does the anatomical dissection of Annabella function as a shocking *dénouement* to this play?

Well, I consider that the answer lies not in the *fact* that this evisceration happens, but as a result of *when*, *where* and *how* it happens. Most critics locate the dramatic climax of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* at Giovanni's entrance with Annabella's heart on his dagger (during the banquet of V.vi.). Richard Madelaine has said of this entrance that it 'resembles that of a literal executioner [...] 'trimm'd in reeking blood' [...] from his repeated stabbing of Annabella in the previous scene and from an *off-stage* disembowelling as he practised the art of quartering in 'plough[ing] up' his

sister's 'womb.'³⁹ Close reading of V.v. and V.vi. reveals, however, that Madelaine's interpretation of events might well be far from the truth – and I therefore want to argue as I end this chapter that the anatomical conclusion of *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* comes not in its banquet scene (in which Giovanni enters with Annabella's heart upon a dagger) – but in the marriage-bed murder scene that precedes it. As I now intend to demonstrate, textual evidence points to the fact that it is here – and not off-stage between the two scenes – that Annabella's heart is removed.

I want to argue that, in this dramatic unit, the boy actor playing Annabella neither had his representation of femininity 'quartered' (a punishment that was usually reserved for the political crime of treason) nor 'disembowelled' by the Giovanni actor, but rather had a single incision made into a prosthesis that was attached to his lower abdomen that was then opened up to run the length of Annabella's stomach to her thoracic cavity – from which a second prosthetic representation (of the cardiac muscle) was presumably extracted whilst both actors were still on stage.

Despite critical presumptions about 'repeated stabbing', the 1633 quarto (indeed all subsequent editions) provides evidence of only a *single* (clinical) incision into Annabella's body (by means of the stage direction: 'stabs her' following Giovanni's line 'To save thy fame, and kill thee with a kiss' (V.v. 84)).⁴⁰ I therefore want to argue two things: firstly that to kill someone 'with a kiss' does not imply frenzied stabbing; and secondly, that it was in order to perform the stagecraft that was required to 'eviscerate' Annabella (and to begin the process that would eventually remove a prosthetic heart from this boy actor's costume) that Giovanni bends low to kiss his sister as he first cuts into her – thus temporarily masking her body (and his fake incision into it) from his audience's view.

In my 'reading' of this scene, the context of Annabella's dispatch is not frenzied; no 'butchery' or 'hacking' at her body is evident. Her brother's first incision is precise, it is clinical, and it is followed by an entirely rational conversation:

[Stabs her]

Gio. Thus die, and die by me, and by my hand:
 Revenge is mine; honour doth love command.

Ann. O brother, by your hand?

Gio. When thou art dead
 I'll give my reasons for't; for to dispute
 With thy – even in thy death – most lovely beauty,
 Would make me stagger to perform this act
 Which I must glory in.

(V.v. 85 – 91)

It is not until the end of line 90, then (at which point Giovanni brings his dissection into the present time and space – with the proximal deictic '*this act*'), that Annabella realises that her brother's immediate intention is indeed a 'second death': her dissection and re-possession of 'his'

heart (that has for the last three acts been lodged within her body). Annabella therefore prepares herself at *this* point ('Forgive him, Heaven – and me my sins; farewell,') for the evisceration that commences during the following lines: 'Brother, unkind, unkind – mercy, great Heaven! – O – O!' (and this is some twenty seconds of stage-time *after* the first incision has been made into her body, according to the quarto). Why, otherwise, should the language here speed up, turn to staccato repetition, contain a plea for mercy, an exclamation of surprise and culminate in Annabella's first (and last) gasps of pain? The incision that is marked to have occurred some nine lines previously is characterised by no such horrified response; and I therefore want to argue that Giovanni undertakes the dissection of his sister not *offstage* but between lines 90 and 105 of *this* scene – during which his language describes the traditional route of dissection through the human cadaver, for we know that anatomists:

[...] dissected the body [...] commencing with the abdominal viscera, then moving on to the thoracic cavity, the head, and finally, the external members – the limbs [...] In William Harvey's words [...] the anatomist moved 'from the lower belly, nasty yet recompensed by admirable variety' on to the 'parlour' (i.e. thorax), and finally 'the divine banquet of the brain' [...]⁴¹

Giovanni does exactly this, starting with Annabella's womb (l. 95), he proceeds upwards until he urges 'shrink not, courageous hand' immediately before cutting out and revealing his sister's cardiac muscle before his audience at the line 'stand up, my heart' (l. 105) (and I therefore consider that Giovanni's use of the possessive here indicates both that Annabella's heart is commodified – but *also* that he now has in *his very grasp* the heart that, like Fernando, Donne and Sidney, he had exchanged with his lover's (II.i. 31) or thinks is shared by them both (I.i. 34)). By line 102 of this scene, then, the single incision that took place at line 84 has become the multiple 'wounds' to Annabella's *interior* body from which she is said to be 'over-glorious' – or, quite literally, 'shining' in stage blood.⁴²

After he has exited (with or without) Annabella's body there are only ten lines exchanged in the following scene (between Vasques, Soranzo and the Cardinal) before Giovanni re-enters displaying his bloody trophy. This gives him approximately thirty seconds of stage-time in order to undertake the 'offstage' anatomy that is presumed by most critics; yet, since the second scene takes place in a banqueting hall and the first in Annabella's bridal chamber Giovanni would have had to have left one space and travelled to the other using precisely this time if the scenes are understood to run concurrently with each other (which they would seem, to me, to do).

When we see the Cardinal, Florio, Donado, Soranzo, Richardetto, Vasques and the attendants enter and take their places, the eating has not yet started. Their honoured guest is not invited to dine until the third line of the scene: 'Pleaseth your grace / To taste these coarse confections?' It is precisely at this point, mapped back onto his exit from the previous scene, that Giovanni, as a deranged incestuous murderer and quasi-anatomist, enters – offering his audience his own 'divine banquet' – excised from his sister's body.

In closing, then, the point that I want to make is simple: I believe that the concluding evisceration of Annabella's body that is *staged* in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is a concrete manifestation of two phenomena: (i) on a precisely located theatrical and historical level: it represents the desire of John Ford (and Christopher Beeston) to cash in on the vogue for anatomical evisceration that existed in early-modern Europe (and, finally, to provide their London audiences with the on-stage evisceration of a 'guilty' female body); but (ii) on a more general level: it also graphically represents the depths to which dominant patriarchal societies have *always* been willing to sink in order to re-master and control the female form (together with the complicity of their dominant scientific and cultural forms in the process).

Much of this dissertation has been about the female body (in anatomy halls, in pamphlet literature and in society) yet in many ways, too, – because it has primarily been about the early-modern English stage – it has *not* been about the female body at all. As Dymphna Callaghan has recently so articulately and persuasively argued: if critics and theatre historians are looking for representations of *real* women in the play-texts (and production documents) that surround early modern English drama – they simply aren't there; and we will therefore have to look elsewhere (or at these texts in *different* ways than by simply presuming that the location of bodies on stage that *call* themselves 'female' constitutes some kind of 'representation' of femininity) in order to find them.

One possible alternative title for this dissertation was: 'In the Absence of Women: The Masculine Concerns of Early-Modern English Drama', it is a rather depressing title and that is (largely) why it was rejected. Regardless of the recuperative strategies that appear to be involved in a lot of the male authored fantasies that I have here examined, however, one thing *has* hopefully emerged from this thesis; it is the following:

Theatre is *always* formulated in *response* to its society; and, consequently, if the texts that I have analysed (or my *readings* of them) frequently reveal that patriarchal society appears to have been troubled by the emergence of a new biological system of anatomical differentiation that was no longer based upon an *intrinsic* sense of female imperfection; if they consequently appear to have consistently shut down possibilities for female sexuality other than heterosexuality within companionate marriage; and if strategies of dramatic recuperation and control (even as far as the metaphorical evisceration of the bodies of guiltless women) repeatedly seem to have found their way on stage in the early modern period (as part of a violent process of patriarchal re-inscription): all of this simply reveals that dominant sociological paradigms (based on repressive taxonomies of gender that subordinated women) were consistently (and often successfully) being challenged *elsewhere*.

The misogynistic nature of a lot of these texts, together with their hermetically sealed masculine production environments (and their principally male audiences) means that early-modern English theatre could never have contained manifestations of true 'female' agency (and seldom even 'glimpses' of any *possible* agency).

The point is, I think, simple: until female writers, actors and audiences began to take control of the means of dramatic production themselves (first as a result of the cultural agency of figures such as Queen Anne or Queen Henrietta Maria; and, subsequently, during the English Restoration and after) 'proto-feminist' articulations of female influence and autonomy could not be consistently (and unproblematically) articulated *within* the medium of English dramatic entertainment. This does not, of course, mean they were not convincingly and vehemently articulated *outside* it.

Notes to Chapter VI:

¹ Frank Thorney to Winnifride, in Thomas Dekker, John Ford and William Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton* (Act IV Scene ii. 98-100). All quotations from this play refer to the Methuen edition, edited by Simon Trussler, (London: Methuen, 1983). For the purposes of this chapter, I am following general critical practice and assuming that the Frank Thorney (bigamy) plot is principally Ford's, the Mother Sawyer (witchcraft) plot Dekker's and the Cuddy Banks (Morris) plot Rowley's.

² The date 1621 is that of the first production (as it is supposed to have taken place by Andrew Gurr. See *The Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1992), 3rd edition, p. 243).

Etta Soiref Onat also points out that the play was first performed at Court on Dec. 29, 1621 and suggests a probable date of composition in June of the same year. See Dekker, Ford and Rowley, *The Witch of Edmonton, A Critical Edition*, edited by Etta Soiref Onat (New York and London: Garland, 1980), p. 161.

³ Other examples of such definitions may be found in Pierre de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie*, translated by T.B., (London: Edmund Bollifant for G. Bishop and Ralph Newbery, 1586), p. 203: 'the Egyptians [...] used in the midst of their bankets to bring in the Anatomie of a dead bodie dried, that the horror thereof might containe them in all modestie'; *The Second Part of The French Academy* (London: G.B. R.N. R.B., 1594), p. 57: 'as it were a drie anatomy, which is a body consisting onely of bones'; Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611), fol. iii^v: 'Aridelle: f. A leane, or carrian tit; an ill fauoured fleshlesse lade; also, an Anotamie, or bodie whereon there is nought left but skin, and bone.'; William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors* (V. 238): 'One Pinch: a hungrey leane-faced villaine, A meere Anatomie, A mountebanke'; and John Ford, *Love's Sacrifice* (London: I.B. for Hugh Beeston, 1633) sig. D3^r: 'passion and the vowes I owe to you, / have changed me to a lean Anatomy' (the final instance is discussed in detail in this chapter).

⁴ The vignettes, showing performance in a stage space that is bordered by small wooden balustrades, are supposed to be representations of the Phoenix. They are reproduced in Keith Sturges, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), plates 1 & 2 (p. 32).

⁵ It would not be the first time that literary alternatives had been offered. The physician Thomas Raynalde, in the preface to his anatomy of the female body: *The Birth of Mankinde, Otherwyse Named the Woman's Book* (London: T. Raynald, 1565), informed his readers that he had:

'set forth, and evidently declared, all the inwarde partes of women (such as were necessary to be knowen to our purpose) and that not onely in wordes, but also in lyuely and expresse figures, by the which every part before in the booke described, may in manner be as exactly and clearly perceyued, as though ye were present at the cutting open or Anothomie of a dead woman.' (sig. B2^r my italics).

⁶ I have been involved with two productions of the *Witch of Edmonton*. The first was at the University of Kent at Canterbury, in 1987, in which I played Frank Thorney. The second was at the Workshop Theatre of the University of Leeds in 1992, in which I directed an all-male cast. In both instances, audiences reacted to the play primarily on the level of its comic elements — they were both especially receptive to the Cuddy-and-the-Morris plot — and subsequently with the social dimension of the witchcraft narrative, dealing with Mother Sawyer.

⁷ Clearly the relationship between wisdom, folly, sanity and madness is a complicated one (and one need only instance the cases of Hamlet or King Lear in order to make a case for the articulation of profound sociological 'truths' under the guise of 'insanity'). Yet Ratcliffe is clearly not as complex a character as Lear or Hamlet are; she is far more two-dimensional and most of her language is gibberish. Moreover, as I intend to demonstrate in the rest of this chapter, Ford's possible critiques of the processes of anatomy always appear to come almost by accident (and from the dramaturgically marginalized). As a result, I would argue that they repeatedly take second place to his overt desire to stage violent, sanguine and spectacular eviscerations of the human form.

⁸ One startling instance of how much wealth, kudos and status the act of anatomy could bring may be found in the case of Dr. William Petty who rose from humble beginnings (he was the son of a clothier, born in the small Hampshire town of Rumsey in 1623) to become MP for Westlow, a Knight of the Realm and one of the first Fellows of the Royal Society. In later life Petty had an income of up to £6,000 per annum and an estate of over 50,000 acres. His transition from medicine to politics was, it would appear, seamless. After being elected unanimously as Professor of Anatomy at Oxford University in January 1651 he was recommended by parliament to become one of the surveyors of Ireland in 1652. It was in the latter endeavour that he acquired most of his land and money, yet the similarity between the two offices is made abundantly clear by his 1691 tract: *The Political Anatomy of Ireland*.

Petty's biography (taken from Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London: Tho. Bennet, 1692), Vol. 2., pp. 609–612) is such a startling example of the upwardly mobile anatomist that it is reproduced here in its entirety as Appendix V.

⁹ John Donne in the 'panegyrick verses' before Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities. Hastily Gobbled up in Five Months Travells* [...] (London: William Stansby, 1611).

¹⁰ For an account of the gender bias in early modern anatomy (and of the particular desire to display the female interior), see footnote 5 (above) and also Valerie Traub, 'Gendering Mortality in Early Modern Anatomies', in Traub, Kaplan and Callaghan (eds.), *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Also good on this phenomenon is Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) especially Chapter III: 'The Body in the Theatre of Desire' (pp. 39 – 53) and Chapter IV: 'Execution Anatomy and Infamy: Inside the Renaissance Anatomy Theatre' (pp. 54 – 84).

¹¹ The stage direction at the head of this scene reads: 'Enter Katherine: a bed thrust forth, on it Frank in a slumber'. Frank's position is, therefore, raised up to the waist-height-or-so of his fellow actors and central to the Phoenix's rather small stage (as this would be the only place to which a bed *could* be thrust considering what we know about this theatre). He is also, importantly, in a state that drifts in and out of consciousness.

¹² I am, of course, drawing on the work of Nancy J. Vickers here whose seminal essay 'Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Inquiry* 8:2 (Winter 1981), sets out the processes of anatomical emblazonment that were undertaken in Petrarchan sonnet sequences.

¹³ I am following general critical practice (and the dating proposed by Gurr, *Shakespearean Stage*) in presuming the following dates, companies and venues for Ford's works as a solo dramatist: *The Broken Heart* (The Kings Men at the Blackfriars, 1625 – 33), *The Lover's Melancholy* (The King's Men at the Globe & Blackfriars, 1628), *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (Queen Henrietta Maria's Men at the Phoenix, 1629 – 33), *Perkin Warbeck* (Queen Henrietta Maria's Men at the Phoenix, 1629 – 34), *Love's Sacrifice* (Queen Henrietta Maria's Men at the Phoenix, 1632? – 33) and *The Lady's Trial* (Beeston's Boys at the Phoenix, 1638).

Ford's Phoenix plays for Queen Henrietta Maria's Men remained the property of Beeston after he sacked his entire company in 1636 (during a nine month interruption of playing caused by plague) and re-opened the theatre, in 1637, with the new group made up largely of young actors who came to be known to the Revels Office as *Beeston's Boys* (because it seems to have consisted of a much larger than usual ratio of boys to adults – see Bentley *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* Vol. I, p. 234). This company presented *The Ladies Trial* in 1638 and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and *Love's Sacrifice* again during the season of 1639.

¹⁴ Richard Crashaw, *The Poems English Latin and Greek of Richard Crashaw*, edited by L. C. Martin (Oxford, 1927), p. 181 (and Introduction, p. xc).

¹⁵ All textual references and quotations refer to the Revels edition of *The Broken Heart*, edited by T. J. B. Spencer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).

¹⁶ For further instances of confusion over bodily fluids, see *Love's Sacrifice* (London: I. B. for Hugh Beeston, 1633) in which The Duke claims to cry tears of blood: 'Behold, I offer up the sacrifice / Of bleeding teares, shed from a faithful spring [...]' (sig. L1^v) and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, edited by Brian Morris (London: Ernest Benn, 1968) where the Friar instructs Giovanni to 'Cry to thy heart, wash every word thou utter'st / In tears (and if't be possible) of blood [...]' (I. i. 72–3). Such imagery is also a clear echo of that used for Christ's Passion.

¹⁷ See *Love's Sacrifice*: 'Art thou *Caraffa*? Is there in thy veynes / One drop of blood that issued from the loynes / Of Pavy's ancient Dukes? (sig. H2^v) and *'Tis Pity*: Soranzo. 'But know, Grimaldi, though, may be, thou art / My equal in thy blood [...]' (I. ii. 36–7).

¹⁸ An excellent account of the poetics of dismemberment in Renaissance drama may be found in Susanne Wofford, 'The Body Unseamed: Shakespeare's Late Tragedies', in *Shakespeare's Late Tragedies. A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Susanne L. Wofford (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996). pp. 1–21.

¹⁹ For the best account of this myth see Euripides, *Bacchæ* 1044 & ff. From whence Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3, 511 ff and also Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 44 – 6. Pentheus torn by Mænads was also not infrequently depicted in Attic vase paintings from the late 6th Century onwards.

²⁰ See Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London, 1612), sig. E3^v.

²¹ Kathleen McLuskie, *Renaissance Dramatists* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities press International, 1989), p. 154.

²² See also the Duke from *Love's Sacrifice*: 'Forbeare; the ashy paleness of my cheeke / Is scarletted in ruddy flakes of wrath.' (sig. H2^v) and 'I, wrapt in admiration, view / Lillies and roses growing in thy cheeks.' (sig. B3^r).

²³ Although Ford chooses initially to refer to the same dagger as 'weapon' (V. II. 44), he immediately modifies it, saying that it has *acted* as an 'instrument'.

²⁴ Typical examples of seventeenth-century medical steel-work may be seen today in the surgical and obstetrical instruments given to the Royal College of Physicians by Dr. Thomas Prujean on his admission as a candidate in 1653 and are referred to in Sir Geoffrey Keynes, *Harvey Through John Aubrey's Eyes, the 254th Harvian Oration Delivered at the Royal College of Physicians 17 October 1958* (London: The Lancet Office, 1958), pp. 13–14.

I am grateful also to Dr. Anne-Maria Estor (of the School of English at the University of Leiden) for the efforts that she made to allow me to photograph the collection of early-modern dissection instruments that are held in the Boerhaave Museum (Leiden).

²⁵ Ford's use of the term 'to tent' a wound is, however, not unique. Further examples may be found in Webster: 'Search my wound deeper; tent it with steel / That made it [...]' (John Webster, *The White Devil*, V. vi. 238–9) and Shirley: 'I have a sword dares tent a wound / As far as any'.

²⁶ *The Broken Heart*, edited by T.J.B. Spencer (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), p. 206.

²⁷ For an account of the use of stage blood in Renaissance theatre see Leo Kirschbaum, 'Shakespeare's Stage Blood and its Significance', *PMLA* vol. 64 (1949), pp. 517–529. There are also several records in Henslowe's diaries of regular quantities of pig's blood, held in bladders, being bought for use at the Rose and the Fortune.

²⁸ In ancient and medieval physiology the body was divided into four 'humours' (blood, phlegm, choler and black choler – or melancholy) these, combined with the 'complexions' (hot or cold, moist or dry) determined the nature and character of the body. The 'sanguine' complexion was supposed to be characterised by the predominance of the blood over the other three humours, and was indicated by a ruddy countenance, and a courageous, hopeful and amorous disposition.

The 'wanton' courtier Ferentes also blames his blood for the lascivious actions that lead up to his murder: 'My forfeit was in my blood, and my life hath answer'd it. (sig. H2^r). Florio, in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, blames 'the spleen of [...] disordered bloods' for the fight between Grimaldi and Vasques (I. II. 22).

²⁹ Sir Phillip Sidney, *The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney*, edited by William A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford: O.U.P., 1962), pp. 75 - 6

³⁰ John Donne, *The Complete Poems of John Donne*, edited by A. J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 46.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² See also *'Tis Pity* (IV. III. I. 69) in which Annabella also refers to Soranzo as 'hangman' despite his being in the process of threatening her with his drawn sword.

³³ Such a contrast between male wholeness and female anatomical isolation may also be observed in *The Broken Heart* in which Ithocles points out to his sister: 'We had one father, in one womb took life' (III.II. 34).

³⁴ See Nancy J. Vickers, 'Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme', *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 1981), 8:2, p. 269.

³⁵ Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 51.

³⁶ Sawday cites one particular exemplar of a literal 'second death' on the anatomy slab when, in 1587, John Stowe recorded the example of an anatomy being started on the corpse of a hanged felon who was discovered, after incision in to the thoracic cavity to still be living. The subject 'lived till the three and twentie of Februarie, and then died' (Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 62).

³⁷ A full account of Harvey's studies in Cambridge and Padua is given in Gweneth Whitteridge, *William Harvey and the Circulation of the Blood* (London: Macdonald, 1971), pp. 3–36. In which the author points out that:

'[...] in Harvey's case there is no doubt that he carried with him the stamp of the University of Padua. There his own interest in natural history was developed into a detailed study of human and comparative anatomy and all that went with it.' (p. 3).

³⁸ For a summary of criticism attributing notions of 'melodrama' sensationalism' and 'decadence' to Ford's plays (and especially *'Tis Pity She's a Whore'*), see Richard Madelaine, "Sensationalism' and 'Melodrama' in Ford's Plays", in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions*, edited by Michael Neill (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1988), pp. 29 – 53.

³⁹ Richard Madelaine, *Sensationalism*, p. 32. My italics.

⁴⁰ The scene may be found at (sig. K1^v) of the 1633 quarto. There were two issues of the quarto in 1633, the second of which had an extra page 'tipped in' containing a commendatory verse by Thomas Ellice. This extra page does not effect signatures and appears either after the title page or page A2 in extant copies.

⁴¹ Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 132 (the quotation from Harvey may also be found in Geoffrey Keynes, *The Life of William Harvey* (Oxford: OUP, 1966), p. 90–91).

⁴² Derek Roper has already pointed out this possible reading of 'shining'. The footnote to V. v. 103 of the Revels edition reads: "Over-glorious] beautiful beyond measure ('glorious' has possible implications of 'richly adorned' and 'shining': *O.E.D.*, s.v. glorious 4, over, 25)" John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore'*, edited by Derek Roper (London: Methuen, 1975), p. 115.

Afterword:

Interrogating Theory with Practice: Some Speculations about Philology, the Body and Performance

This dissertation has been about bodies in two ultimately inaccessible incarnations: (i) as slabs of dead-meat on the Renaissance dissection table (or as delineated in just as inanimate form on the pages of early modern anatomical treatises); and (ii) as the equally unattainable (yet once living, breathing and moving) bodies on the several stages of early modern London. Over the course of six chapters, I have attempted to employ as meticulous a New Historicist (or, in my better moments, Cultural Materialist) methodology as I can, in order to outline some of the developments that I consider to have been central to the advancing medical epistemologies of the body that existed in the later European Renaissance – and I have subsequently attempted to use this information to illuminate some of the significances that I think this rise in experimental anatomy had on the figurations of sexed and gendered bodies that made their way onto (certain) early-modern English stages. Perhaps, then, now that I have set out my overall thesis, it is a good time to ask *why* I have done this – and to turn to what the *implications* of my work might be.

I am fortunate enough to approach early-modern English theatre from the privileged position of being both (increasingly) a literary critic and educator and (more habitually) a theatre practitioner. Most of the decisions (and interpretative choices) that I have made during the course of writing of this dissertation have therefore come out of a rigorous application of the theories that have presented themselves to me, in a practical sense (and especially with regards to the *staging* of these plays). Equipped with the various play-texts that I have analysed throughout the course of this dissertation, and the bodies of various actors, I have – over the last four years – attempted to work through as many (and by now it is most certainly the majority) of the various interpretations that have become visible to me as I have attempted to ‘historicize’ these play-texts – and always with a view to seeing whether or not my ‘readings’ might well also be possible ‘stagings.’ In this endeavour, my presumption has always been that if an idea can work under the strip lighting of a scenically denuded rehearsal room in a modern University, it might well also have worked on the Renaissance stage.

This is, of course, no testament to the ‘accuracy’ or ‘faithfulness’ of my attempts – nor should it be understood that I have at any point endeavoured to ‘exhume’ the totality (or truth) of *any* past performance; or even that I have ever attempted to work towards historical ‘reconstructions’ in any way. I have not – and the follies of Shakespeare’s Globe can tell us all that we need to know about such foolhardy (positivist) endeavours. My simple aim (and I hope that much of this

dissertation *has* been uncomplicated) has been to work towards critical *interpretations* of Renaissance play-texts that are not mere 'readings' – because it seems to me (as a result of what is now approaching ten years of working with Renaissance play-texts in a practical sense – and six years with one ensemble of actors) that the academic advantages of interrogating critical and philological theory (or what can be ascertained as historical fact) with dramatic practice (and vice versa) are twofold: firstly, because it appears to me that this methodology ensures that the intellectual 'chaff' of fanciful readings is quickly separated out from the more productive 'grain' that might well go on to germinate into informed elucidations of a given text; and secondly, because readings – and often the possibility of unthought-of readings – *always* begin to emerge simply as a result of putting a Renaissance text up 'on its feet' and allowing it to 'breathe' through actors.

For that reason, and in relation to chapters two and four of this dissertation, I sincerely doubt whether I would have come to the conclusions about Falstaff that I have without the extraordinary actors of Trinity Repertory Company (Providence, Rhode Island) or the discussions that I had with them at Bread Loaf School of English in Vermont; and I would *certainly* not have come to my conclusions about Moll Cutpurse without the exceptional interpretation that Chris Thorpe brought to that role in the production of *The Roaring Girl* that I directed for Miscreants, at the University of Leeds.

This had been an attempt at a Doctorate of Philosophy in *Theatre Studies* – and one of the advantages of working in this discipline is that practical work is increasingly becoming an avenue through which substantial amounts of research time can be spent (and in which the lip-service that has often been paid to notions of practical investigation in the past is now turning to genuine acknowledgement of a widely recognised and *tangible* research tool). With regards to where this dissertation can go, then, it seems to me that one of the most logical (and profitable) areas of further inquiry would be a combined practical and theoretical examination of one particular writer whose *œuvre* is largely absent from this thesis: Ben Jonson.

Despite his apparent absence (for as the reader will now know he does not actually appear all that often in its pages) Jonson figures in this dissertation in two ways: firstly, in the preparation of this thesis I wrote a chapter on the performativity of gender in Jonson's *New Inn* that – largely for reasons of space – could not be included in this finished draft. In this investigation I attempted to examine some of the ways in which the biological stability of the boy-actor's anatomy can be used to mitigate for homo-erotic readings of the masculine *cuerpo* in Jonson's (theatrical) *œuvre*.

It seems to me that *The New Inn* is a play that quite deliberately sets out to interrogate notions of appetite and consumption; and that Jonson's fictional hostelry (the Light Heart Inn in Barnet) like its dramatic precursor (the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap) is evidently intended to be a *locus* of metatheatrical revelry. It is a venue for disguise and impersonation, an environment in which

comic rhetoric (wrapped up in the histrionic energy of rehearsal and performance) are all actively staged; yet crucially *The New Inn* is not primarily conceived as a dramatic *place* or *site* but as a theatrical *event* or *product*.

This play appears to be structured as a flamboyant dramatic gallimaufry, drawing on a history of similar narratives and fashioned solely for the purposes of audience *consumption*. As an architectural environment in which stage-routines are metatheatrically lapped-up in the same way that food and drink are physically guzzled, Jonson's fictional Inn is not the primary focus of attention, but rather a metaphorical frame of reference within which his skilfully crafted 'menus' of theatrical performance are presented. Significantly then, *The New Inn* articulates a notion of theatre that derives its functionality from the fact that 'cooking' and creating drama are both processes that draw on stock ingredients – and are prepared in order to be actively *consumed*. From such a perspective, the play may be seen to take a distinctly materialist stance in relation to the phenomenological nature of early modern drama: a proposition that has radical implications for an interpretation of male bodies in performance on the Jonsonian stage.

Moreover, in the case of this play's initial performances at least, such a materialist approach to theatre is powerfully underscored by the structural (and architectural) similarities between Jonson's fictional tavern and the dramatic space within which his story unfolded. 'Fat Ben's' 'bill of fare' was written for performance at the Blackfriars (the Serlian hall-theatre that had been converted from the Upper Frater Hall of Blackfriars monastery precinct by the Burbages some thirty-three years prior to its staging of *The New Inn*); it is therefore important to pause and to note that Jonson's theatrical 'dishes' were commissioned to be 'served up' on a stage that had itself probably once been part of a refectory. The notion of consumption that connects Goodstock's 'pub', the monks' 'hall' and Jonson's 'theatre' is thus augmented by the degree to which historical, geographical and architectural boundaries all metaphorically collapse to become almost indistinguishable. As is manifestly demonstrated in the language of this play's prologue, 'eating' and 'watching' *The New Inn* appear to be cognates ...

The point is that the Host's public-house and Jonson's private-theatre are *both* establishments to which the hungry flock, before paying to be entertained or 'nourished'. *The New Inn's* subject matter (the *theatricality* of this tavern, its rehearsals, performances and the voyeuristic *consumption* of its gendered roles) quickly blurs with the spectacle and material practices of the Blackfriars itself and, as its action commences, private-theatre audiences must have been quickly led to understand that the Light Heart was transforming itself back into a version of the playhouse in which they sat; within which ludic space overtly stage-managed meta-theatricalities would swiftly be 'dished up'.

Given that *The New Inn* was written to be performed within a *specific* rather than any *generic* theatre, then (and that, in general, pubs and theatres are both institutions in which the public

gather with *specific* desires), this play might well reveal that the spectators of the Blackfriars were understood to have brought *idiosyncratic* appetites to their choice of theatrical venue, as might tavern guests. And if that *is* the case, can Jonson's dramatic spectacle be understood as actively consumed by an audience with *identifiable* histrionic hankerings?

The important question, then, would seem to be the following: whom did Jonson (and whom did he not) want, or expect, in his theatres? and how did he *exploit* the performance traditions of his various venues in order to underscore the homo-erotic (and meta-theatrical) significances of his on-stage action? By punningly laying itself out as a 'bill of fare' 'seasoned' to particular 'tastes', was Jonson deliberately revealing that *The New Inn* was aimed at a particular market? and if so, was that market particularly attracted to the homo-erotic elements of his drama? and what was the function of the boy-actor in all this? ...

The second way that Jonson figured in the preparation of this thesis is due to the fact that – as part of an international conference that I organised at the University of Warwick in April, 2000 (on representations of the female body on and off the early modern English stage) – I directed another of my all-male productions: this time a version of Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*. In my (exclusively) practical investigations of this play (at the University of Leeds in the month leading up to the conference) the interplay of comic androgyny against the concrete biology of the boy-actor's body once again began to unearth some fascinating interpretative spins on the structuring (and gendering) of the *rehearsal* processes of early modern theatre themselves – and I therefore feel that this, too, would also bear profitable analysis.

In short, then, this dissertation is hopefully just a beginning; an opening of certain doors and an element of historical and theoretical groundwork for the several investigations that will hopefully extend far beyond the simple limitations of its three hundred or so pages. My intention is to continue to work with the body (in an abstract and academic sense, attempting to root it in the medical, legal and performing traditions of the early modern period; but *also* in the living sense of working with my own contemporary actors) – as a result, as I move on from this dissertation I anticipate that my *next* object of analysis will be the boy-actor in Jonson's theatrical output. An analysis of the adolescent male body in performance; and an investigation of the mechanics of rehearsal and presentation within *various* transvestite theatrical genres (and possibly also in historical relation to – or at least by means of contrast with – the masque texts that Jonson *also* wrote to include certain elements of actual *female* performance).

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